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OPINION METER

This week's poll:
New Year's Eve celebration: Eat out or stay in?

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

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Book Available

The NMI Council for the Humanities has announced the availability of Lino M. Olopai's *The Rope of Tradition.*

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Intel Failure

Obama said the intelligence community had information that could have possibly prevented the attempted terror attack on a Detroit-bound airliner.

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King is new NMC board chair

"It is to fulfill the mission of NMC and to ensure that the president properly administers the college.

—Janet King, NMC Board of Regents chair, when asked about her intentions and the direction she wants the NMC board to pursue.

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Regent Janet King was elected as the new chairperson of the Northern Marianas College Board of Regents during a tense board meeting yesterday that saw the presence of over 50 persons watching the proceedings.

King, a practicing lawyer based on Tinian, gave up her practice—at least until the expiration of her term with the NMC board—so she could assume the chairmanship.

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Fernandez: I hope regents will continue to support me

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Embattled Northern Marianas College president Dr. Carmen Fernandez expressed hope that the Board of Regents will continue to support her leadership, right after the Senate confirmed on a 5-0 vote the re-appointment of Charles V. Cepeda to the Northern Marianas College's Board of

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Northern Marianas College president Dr. Carmen Fernandez, left, reacts right before the Senate voted yesterday afternoon to confirm Gov. Benigno R. Fitial's reappointment of Charles V. Cepeda, third from right, to the NMC Board of Regents. Besides Fernandez, Rep. Diego T. Benavente (R-Saipan), second from right, also expressed support to Cepeda. Also in the photo are former Rep. Ben Sablan and Marianas Public Lands Trust member Pedro Deleon Guerrero, right.
HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

MPLT remits $4.1M to the general fund

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

The Marianas Public Lands Trust yesterday told senators that MPLT has already remitted the controversial $4.1 million in interest income to the general fund for appropriation in Fiscal Year 2009.

This was disclosed by Pedro R. Deleon Guerrero, whose re-appointment to the MPLT board of trustees received Senate confirmation yesterday afternoon.

All five senators present yesterday

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Rebuenog declared the Northern Islands mayor

From a 1-vote win, Aldan now loses by 2 votes

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Superior Court Associate Judge David A. Wiseman yesterday declared Ramona Taisakan Rebuenog of the Covenant Party as mayor of the Northern Islands.

Wiseman determined that Rebuenog had the largest number of legal votes in the Nov. 7, 2009, election over independent candidate Tobias Dela Cruz Aldan, after 18 of the 21 ques-

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Woman in 'ice' case signs plea bargain with US govt

A woman facing drug trafficking charges informed the federal court yesterday that she has already signed a plea agreement with the U.S. government.

Sharee Demapan Diaz, through counsel, told U.S. District Court for the NMI designated judge David Wiseman that the plea agreement has already been signed.

Diaz requested a hearing for her change of plea. Wiseman set the change of plea hearing for Jan. 12, 2010, at 10am.

Yesterday, assistant U.S. attorney James Benedetto filed an information charging Diaz with one count of aiding and abetting possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute.

The charging information stated that on March 17, 2009, Diaz aided and abetted another in the possession of 0.41 grams of methamphetamine or "ice" with intent to distribute it.

Under the plea agreement, the U.S. government will recommend to the court a sentence of six to 12 months in prison. If the court determines that Diaz is not entitled to a reduction for a mitigating role, the agreed upon sentencing guidelines range is 10 to 16 months in jail. A fine of $3,000 to $30,000 may also be imposed.

U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency agents arrested Diaz and her fiancé, Jawn Joyner, in October. The complaint charged Joyner and Diaz with three counts of possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute.

DEA said Diaz was Joyner's retail seller, runner and intermediary. Joyner pleaded not guilty. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Ex-Fund trustee seeks pension benefit for services to board

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

A former trustee of the NMI Retirement Fund is seeking pension benefit from the agency for the services he rendered on the board. The case awaits the full board decision following approval of his application by the administrative hearing officer.

Michael White—who served as a Fund trustee for 18 years, from 1980 to 1998—appeared before the board of trustees in a previous meeting and formally submitted his application to the agency.

Saipan Tribune learned that White's application was initially rejected by the benefits coordinator. White appealed to the administrative hearing officer, who rendered a favorable decision. The benefits coordinator then appealed the case to the full board.

White told the *Saipan Tribune* yesterday that he used as basis for his pension application a law that allows board and commission members to get a pension benefit if they served for 10 years on the board.

He cited 1 CMC section 8341(f), which had been repealed by Public Law 13-60. White said that despite the repeal, the law clearly states that anybody who has the right to a pension is not affected by the repealer.

"…And I have a right to a pension when they repealed that law," White said.

Board chair Sixto Igisomar and Fund legal counsel Viola Alepuyo said yesterday that the full board has yet to issue a decision in White's case.

"Mr. White's denial of his application to receive a pension is currently before the [Fund board] on appeal. As such, the board is unable to comment on this matter until such time as they have issued a decision," Alepuyo said yesterday.

She explained that in compliance with the Commonwealth Administrative Procedures Act and Fund regulations, the parties were given an opportunity to submit to the board their proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law on or before Dec. 30, 2009. Once the administrative record is complete, Alepuyo said she will submit to the board a legal opinion and the board will review the administrative record in its entirety in order to make a decision.

"At this time, a decision has not been made," she added.

The chairman of the Commonwealth Retirement Association, Juan Sablan, expressed opposition yesterday to any favorable decision in White's request.

"Our concern is: If this request will be approved, it will affect all other boards and commissions because it will set a precedent," Sablan said.

Under existing statute, all board members serve as "volunteers" and they only get a stipend of up to $60 per full board meeting.

During the board's recent meeting, Sablan urged the trustees to reject White's proposal.

The CRA chairman pointed out that once the request is approved, all previous board members will start claming pension benefits from the Fund, even if they didn't pay anything to the agency. He said this will further hurt the fiscal state of the Fund, which is mandated to protect the interest and welfare of its members.

Sablan said that association members are deeply concerned about the board's decision in the case.

The Retirement Fund is faced with a huge unfunded liability as a result of its financial problems. Although it won a court battle against the central government relating to over $231 million in unpaid employer's contribution, the Fund has yet to collect on this debt as both parties are still negotiating.

On top of the more than $231 million unpaid obligation to the Fund, some $26 million also remain to be collected from various autonomous government agencies.

No taxpayers' money set aside for inauguration so far

Runoff election shortens preparation time

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

No taxpayers' money has so far been set aside for the inauguration of Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Gov. Eloy S. Inos, according to interim press secretary Teresa Kim, who co-chairs the Inauguration Committee along with Special Assistant for Administration Esther Fleming.

When Fitial was first elected into office in 2005, his inauguration committee received $200,000 from the government for the January 2006 inaugural activities.

Kim, who is also legal counsel for Inos, confirmed that when Fitial was en route to the Philippines to spend the holidays with his in-laws, he stopped by Guam where they held a fundraiser for the inauguration.

Fitial left Saipan on Dec. 22 for the holidays. He came back yesterday.

"Other than the fundraiser, the solicitation for funds is being done from here by the inauguration committee. I am not sure how much we will spend for the inauguration, but at this time, no government funds have been set aside," Kim told *Saipan Tribune.*

The Inauguration Committee hopes to raise as much funds as possible to minimize the cost to the government.

"I believe the governor's and lt. governor's efforts to minimize the use of public funds differentiate this inauguration from the past inaugurations," said Kim.

Fitial and Inos will be sworn in at 3pm on Jan. 11, 2010, at the Saipan World Resort in Susupe.

Fitial, 64, is only the second governor in CNMI history to be re-elected. He was elected in November 2005, and was sworn into office in January 2006.

Lost time

The general elections were held on Nov. 7, and the gubernatorial runoff election between the Covenant Party's Fitial-Inos tandem and the Republican team of Rep. Heinz S. Hofschneider and House Speaker Arnold I. Palacios was held on Nov. 23.

Kim said the holding of a runoff election shortened the preparation time for the inauguration.

"In the past, the elected governor had more time to prepare for the inauguration, but because of our new runoff election law, the planning started late. We lost a whole month for preparations. As such, invitations went out later and RSVPs are expected to come in later," she added.

All invitations for dignitaries, off island guests and business partners have been mailed out.

Among those expected to attend the inauguration ceremonies are Guam Gov. Felix P. Camacho, who flew in to Saipan briefly to celebrate Fitial and Inos's victory; U.S. Department of the Interior's Nik Pula; Assistant Secretary for Insular Affairs at the Interior Tony M. Babauta; the chiefs of Micronesian islands; and many business partners.

Inaugural preparations are going well thus far, Kim said.

The committee has solidified the inaugural activities, to be kicked off by an inaugural golf tournament on Jan. 9 at the LaoLao Golf Resort in Kagman; an inaugural Mass on Jan. 10 at 2pm at the Mt. Carmel Cathedral in Chalan Kanoa; the inauguration ceremony on Jan. 11 at 3pm; a VIP Ball at 6:30pm, also at the Saipan World Resort in Susupe; and a People's Ball at the Fiesta Resort & Spa in Garapan at the same time.

The organizational sessions for the 17th Senate and 17th House of Representatives will also be held on Jan. 11, at 10am on Capital Hill.

No administrative leave

In other news, the Fitial administration said there will be no administrative leave today, New Year's Eve, for the Executive Branch.

"The public needs to be served and as such, all government offices will remain open until 4:30pm," Kim said.

Extended hours to sell, serve alcohol

The hours to sell and serve alcoholic beverages will be extended until 4am on Dec. 31, 2009 (New Year's Eve), in accordance with 4 CMC, Subsection 5556.

A Department of Commerce statement issued yesterday said these extended hours are only for the evening of Thursday, Dec. 31, 2009, until 4am on Friday, Jan. 1, 2010.

"This authorization does not allow for further expansion of the extended hours. Any abuse of this extension will not be tolerated. This authorization only applies to Class-3 on-sale licensees," said the Commerce statement.

Contact the Alcoholic Beverage and Tobacco Control Division Hotline at 483-1821 to report any violation of the extended hours of sale. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

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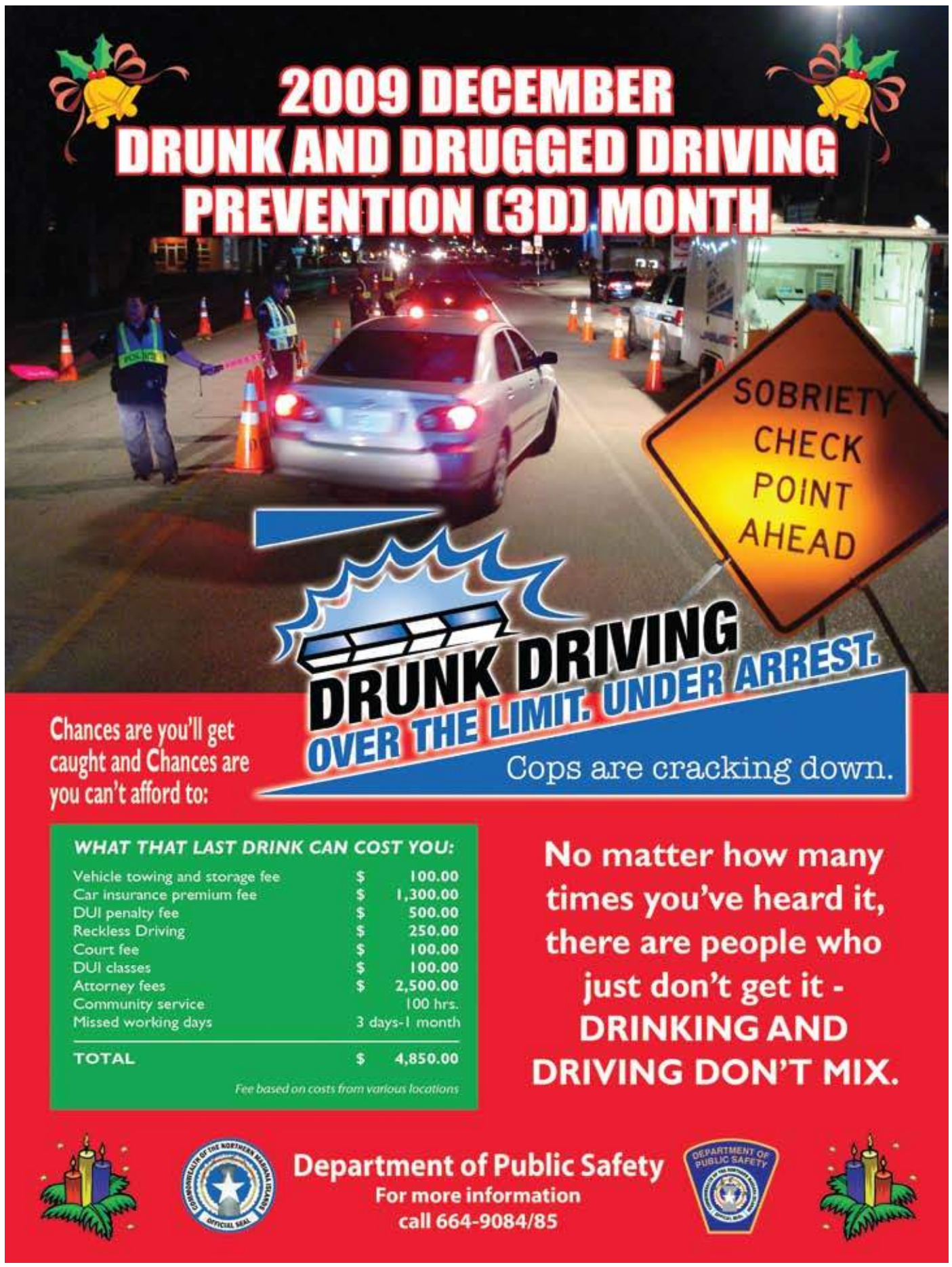
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Nanmeido and the Peace Bell

Nanmeido is a non-sectarian temple dedicated to the spirits of the U.S. and Japanese soliders and the local people who lost their lives in the Battles of Saipan and Mid-Pacific in 1944. Inside of the temple, there is a large Peace Bell hanging from the ceiling. It was donated as a wish for world peace by the Gifu Buddhist Association of Gifu, Japan in 2006.

Ringing of the bells on New Year's Eve

Joya No Kane

Joya No Kane means temple bells surrounding the end of the year at midnight on New Year's Eve. The first 107 times are rung on New Year's Eve and the last time, the 108th time, is rung at the moment the New Year arrives. According to Buddhist belief, the 108 wheels of the temple bells represent the 108 desires of human beings. When the last wheel sounds, these desires are driven away. Thus, the New Year is greeted in a pure condition.

On New Year's Eve in Japan, people go to the nearby Buddhist temples at midnight and ring the bell, hoping for good health and happiness in the coming year and chasing off the evil spirits. Nanmeido will observe this tradition by ringing the Hatsu-Mode (first New Year's visit to a Shinto shrine or Buddhist temple). Please take a moment to visit Katori-Jinja after the Joya No Kane Service.

Please come to join us on Dec. 31, 2009, at 11:45pm, at the Nanmeido (The International House of Prayer) at Sugar King Park. Please carry a flashlight. ***(PR)***

REBUENOG

From Page 1

tioned voters were found not qualified to vote in the Northern Islands mayoral election.

The judge ruled that as a result of the election contest, Rebuenog defeated Aldan by two votes, 64-62.

The Commonwealth Election Commission had said that Aldan received 68 votes, while Rebuenog, got 67 votes. During a recount, the commission determined the same result and certified that Aldan indeed won the race.

Aldan's lawyer, Robert Torres, said they will appeal to the CNMI Supreme Court.

"Mr. Aldan remains undaunted and steadfast. He is of the view that the court did not apply the election statute correctly," he said.

Rebuenog sued CEC and Aldan on Nov. 12, asking the court to declare her as the elected mayor of the Northern Islands because she had the largest number of legal votes cast in the election. She asked the court to void any certification of election issued to Aldan.

Rebuenog claimed that CEC allowed about 21 individuals to vote in Precinct 4d, even if they were ineligible to vote in the Northern Islands mayoral election.

In an 18-page decision yesterday, Wiseman declared as void any certification of election to Aldan and ordered CEC to issue a certification of election to Rebuenog.

Wiseman held Aldan and CEC jointly liable to Rebuenog for her fees, court costs, and expenses she incurred in the litigation.

He ordered Rebuenog to submit a statement of fees and costs within 10 business days.

The judge said the court is bound to follow the procedures set forth under the CNMI Code of Elections.

"As such, this court concludes that 18 of the alleged [21] voters were not qualified to vote in the Northern Island Mayoral Election," he said.

Wiseman said the outcome of the Northern Islands mayoral election was affected by the number of illegal voters.

He said seven disqualified individuals voted for Aldan and four disqualified individuals voted for Rebuenog.

Five voters were disqualified, but their testimony was not found credible.

Wiseman disqualified 17 of the alleged 21 illegal voters after finding they failed to meet the residency requirements of the law.

Wiseman explained that in order to determine whether or not a person is a qualified voter, the court must first determine if the voter meets residency requirements. The statute, the judge said, deals with an individual's residency and lists out the rules to determine whether or not a person is deemed a resident of the place in which his or her vote was cast.

Although many Northern Island residents were forced to leave their homes on the Northern Islands and move to Saipan due to natural disasters, Wiseman said this did not affect an individual's residency under the residency requirement.

Wiseman also determined that disqualified voters have no right to a secret ballot and required the disqualified 17 voters to state whom they had voted for in the mayoral election.

Wiseman said he had to determine who each of the illegal voters cast their votes for, in order to see if this would affect the outcome of the election.

Aldan claimed that the court did not have the authority to compel disqualified voters to announce in open court whom he or she had voted for in the mayoral election.

But Wiseman was not persuaded by this argument. The judge said Aldan could not provide the court with any authority for his position.

On the other hand, Wiseman said, the court has authority that states that disqualified voters have no right to a secret ballot.

MPLT

From Page 1

voted in favor of Deleon Guerrero's confirmation.

They included Senate President Pete P. Reyes (R-Saipan), Vice President Felix Mendiola (Cov-Rota), Senate Floor Leader Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian), Sen. Paul A. Manglona (R-Rota) and Sen. Paterno S. Hocog (R-Rota).

MPLT vice chair Alvaro Santos was also present to show support for Deleon Guerrero's Senate confirmation. Also present was former Rep. Ben Sablan.

"I'm happy that they confirmed my reappointment. I'd like to see MLT funds used in a manner that will mostly benefit people of Northern Marianas descent, as well as the whole community," Deleon Guerrero told *Saipan Tribune*.

Deleon Guerrero started serving on the MPLT board of trustees in June, to fill the void left by former trustee Norman Tenorio.

Because of his Senate confirmation yesterday, he will serve on the MPLT board of trustees for six years.

During the session, Manglona asked Deleon Guerrero whether MPLT remitted the $4.1 million to the general fund, to which Deleon Guererro said "yes."

While the $4.1 million was a resource listed for appropriation in Public Law 16-32 or the FY 2009 budget and House Concurrent Resolutions 16-2 and 16-3, MPLT made no transfer of funds before the end of the fiscal year.

As early as June, Senate Fiscal Affairs Committee chair Frica Pangelinan already warned that the government is expected to have an additional $4.1 million deficit in FY 2009 if MPLT does not transfer to the general fund the resource listed as "recovered interest."

In late October, MPLT voted to remit the amount, but it wasn't until weeks later that the actual remittance was made.

FERNANDEZ

From Page 1

Regents yesterday afternoon.

Fernandez was among the NMC officials, faculty members and students in their signature red shirts who showed up at the Senate session yesterday afternoon to show support for Cepeda's confirmation.

"I feel comfortable that I worked very hard for the institution, that I tried my best to do everything in line with policies and procedures, and really worked hard in the spirit of 'Students First'. I believe that my decisions were the best that could be made at the time," Fernandez told *Saipan Tribune* right after Cepeda's confirmation.

When asked whether she's confident she will get the NMC Board of Regents' support, she said: "I hope so. I really hope so. A lot of changes have been made and I believe they're all in the best interest of the college and I hope they will continue to support my leadership."

After the Senate confirmation, Cepeda and Fernandez headed to the NMC campus for the Board of Regents meeting wherein Janet King beat Cepeda for the chairmanship.

'Address McPhetres issue'

Before voting on Cepeda's confirmation, senators asked Cepeda to look into some NMC issues.

Senate President Pete P. Reyes (R-Saipan) asked Cepeda to resolve the issues surrounding the non-renewal of NMC instructor Sam McPhetres's contract, a concern shared by many lawmakers.

Fernandez has been the subject of criticisms, both within the campus and in the community, for the large number of employees who were recently let go, mostly without any reasons cited. Among them are long-time employees Mark Haag, Glenn Keaton, and McPhetres.

Reyes, in an interview after the session, said "there's got to be some explanation" as to why McPhetres's contract was not renewed.

He described McPhetres as an "institution" at NMC and who has earned the respect of students, faculty and the community at large. "I don't always agree with his positions on issues, but I respect the man," Reyes said.

While NMC students, faculty, and other government officials, including Rep. Diego T. Benavente (R-Saipan) and Rep. David Apatang (R-Saipan), were in the Senate chamber gallery to show support for Cepeda's confirmation, no one provided testimony to the senators.

Benavente later said he was supposed to testify in favor of Cepeda but when he sensed that senators would confirm his re-appointment anyway, he let the Senate proceeding take its course.

"Not too long ago, there's a crisis at the college. Had we lost the college accreditation, that would be detrimental to the whole community. That could have been a disaster… Charles was there through it all. He stood his ground despite the political pressure. He stood by the NMC leadership and he made the right decisions, and NMC's accreditation got re-affirmed. There are lots of challenges but I leave it up to the NMC Board," he said.

Miles Rodriguez, Associated Students of NMC president, said she and her colleagues showed up at the Senate session to support Cepeda's confirmation. They also rushed to NMC after the Senate confirmation.

'Don't' lose focus'

A printed e-mail circulated in the Senate gallery expressed support for Fernandez.

The e-mail, sent by a certain Joe Agape, called on the public not to allow "a few incidents tarnish what has been accomplished at NMC in the last three years."

It then listed some of these accomplishments, including securing accreditation for NMC for six years, increased enrollment, increased scholarship for students, and supporting professional development of NMC staff.

"Although a 'climate of fear' is what many have pegged NMC, they forget that only a few months ago, NMC was a 'Climate of Possible Closure.' Trying to put a team together with everyone focused on securing accreditation for the generations to come is the only correct direction," the letter stated.

It added that changing NMC presidency every two to three years is not a sign of stability that the college would want to show the accrediting body, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

Besides Reyes, the other senators who were present in yesterday's session were Senate Vice President Felix Mendiola, Senate Floor Leader Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian), Sen. Paul A. Manglona (R-Rota), and Sen. Paterno S. Hocog. All five voted in favor of Cepeda.

The next and final Senate session is tentatively set for Jan. 6 on Rota. The Senate president said the venue may still be changed depending on availability of funds to bring staffers to Rota for the session.

KING

From Page 1

King defeated former board chair Charles V. Cepeda on a 4-3 vote by the seven-member body. Regents Maria Paz Younis, Andrew Orsini, and Frank Rabauliman sided with King while Maria Malua Peter and Elaine Hocog Orilla voted for Cepeda.

The voting was supposed to start at 3:40pm but the board waited for Cepeda, who was being confirmed by the Senate yesterday afternoon. Minutes after being confirmed, Cepeda drove from Capital Hill to As Terlaje for the board meeting.

Prior to the voting, the college legal counsel, Jesse Borja, cited a law that disallows practicing lawyers from become chairpersons of commissions or boards.

This was countered by regent Maria Paz Younis, who asked: "Why was it OK in the past? And now it's not?"

She cited other practicing lawyers who have been appointed and had served in various commissions and boards, with no conflict being raised in their appointments.

Borja said that King has the right to challenge, if she wants to, the constitutionality of the law but hinted that the procedure would take a while.

Executive session

NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez tried to speak before the voting but she wanted to do this in an executive session, which is closed to the public. The board rejected having an executive session before the voting.

Fernandez said she has "concerns" about the candidates' nomination and wanted to explain her piece to the board alone.

Regent Orsini made the motion to vote if the board will agree to the executive session. The request was defeated by a 4-3 vote.

Fernandez chose not to raise her "concerns" in the open discussion.

She was visibly upset when King was chosen as the new board chair.

Legal practice

Prior to voting, regent Elaine Orilla said she won't vote for King because of the statute that bars a practicing lawyer from sitting as chairpersons of commissions or boards.

"I am sorry Janet. I will not personally vote for you because I know what the law is," she said.

According to Malua Peter, the board is not trying to disqualify King from the position but is simply complying with the mandates of the law.

After a few exchanges of legal opinions, King decided to give up her legal practice until the expiration of her term in April 2010.

"With the commitment I have with NMC…I want to pursue my role as NMC regent. I am personally giving up my practice to serve for the best interest of the college," she told the board.

Prior to the voting, Cepeda asked King about her intentions and the direction she wants the NMC board to pursue.

"It is to fulfill the mission of NMC and to ensure that the president properly administers the college," she responded.

After the voting for the chairmanship, Paz Younis was nominated to the vice chairmanship. She was supposed to run against Maria Malua Peter, but Peter declined the nomination. Cepeda also declined the treasurer position, which went to Frank Rabauliman.

Younis and Rabauliman were officially named to the positions.

Public comments

King immediately called the meeting to order and proceeded to public comments where four individuals spoke up—all with similar concerns.

Martin Manglona expressed concern about existing issues at the college, including the no-confidence vote of the faculty against Fernandez, the hiring and management practices at the college, and the negative publicity about Fernandez's leadership style.

"I urge this full board to dig down and take a look at the issues. I have nothing against Dr. Fernandez but I call on this board to investigate. I know politics is not involved here," he said.

Commonwealth Retirees Association chair Juan Sablan said the issues surrounding NMC must be prioritized. He specifically asked the board to look into the background of its president to ensure that the college will be stable in her hands.

John Oliver Gonzales complained about the newly hired library director at the college and blamed the NMC president for "hiring" such a person for the position.

Former regent Agnes McPhetres, the last speaker during the public comment period, called on the board to the right thing for NMC.

She congratulated the board's new leadership and said she looks forward to seeing it work to set the college in the right direction.

McPhetres is the first president of NMC.

PSS holds off issuing salary of personnel getting checks

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

A certain number of public school teachers who get their pay via paper checks have yet to receive their salaries, despite their colleagues having already received theirs via direct deposit.

Saipan Tribune learned this yesterday following confirmation with a number of Public School System employees who get their wages via direct deposit or checks.

Acting Association of Commonwealth Teachers president Angela Wheat said there was no explanation for the delay in the pay of those who get their salaries via checks.

Wheat, a Kagman Elementary School teacher, described the "decision" as unfair and a form of discrimination.

Wheat receives her salary through paper checks. Usually, she said, the system releases the paychecks earlier than expected during holidays like Christmas and New Year.

But yesterday, she was disappointed when she was informed by the Finance Department's Treasury section that she could not pick up her check because of "instructions" from Education Commissioner Dr. Rita A. Sablan.

Saipan Tribune called the COE office several times yesterday but was always told that Sablan was in a meeting. Calls were also not returned when requested.

"I called the PSS administrative assistant, the payroll, and the Treasury. All they'd say was they didn't have permission to issue the checks. For me, if you release money to some teachers through direct deposit, that's discrimination if you don't release [paper checks] at the same time," Wheat told *Saipan Tribune*, adding that as of 12pm yesterday she has yet to get a response from the Commissioner's Office.

Wheat said the move to hold off or delay even for a day the issuance of their salary has a significant impact on employees with families.

A check with San Vicente Elementary School yesterday also showed that a similar concern was raised to principal Joaquina DLG. Salas. She said she received some calls from a few personnel about the issue.

Of the 65 total San Vicente workforce, less than 20 staff and teachers get their wages via paper checks.

"Our time keeper also checked the central office…and we're still waiting for their instruction. If not today, they will probably issue the checks tomorrow," she said.

Kagman Elementary School principal Ignacia Demapan also shared the same views. At her school, less than 10 people get paid via paper checks. She said they received no instruction as of 1pm yesterday on the pickup of paper checks for their employees.

Saipan Southern High School acting principal Craig Garrison, meantime, said the checks would probably be released today, Dec. 31.

He said majority of personnel in his school receive their salaries through direct deposit accounts.

DPS in full force for the New Year's Eve, Day celebrations

The Department of Public Safety's uniformed officers are out in full force to ensure the community's safety during the New Year's Eve and New Year's Day celebrations.

DPS spokesman Eric David told *Saipan Tribune* that they went into high gear starting last night until New Year's Day.

"We will be doing saturation patrols, highway interdiction enforcement and sobriety checkpoints," David said.

To prevent firecracker-related injuries or fires, he said DPS will be sending officers out on patrol.

The DPS spokesman said they will be looking for children burning firecrackers without adult supervision.

"We will confiscate firecrackers from unsupervised children or juveniles," he said.

David urged people to be responsible for their actions.

"If you need designated drivers, we are able to do that. If children will be burning firecrackers, make sure that they have adult supervision. We wish for everybody's safety," David said. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

2 men seek taxi service but beat up driver, companion

Two men who had called for a taxi beat up the driver and his female passenger upon arriving in Koblerville early Tuesday morning.

The driver, a Chinese male, sustained lacerations and contusions in the head. He also sustained stab wounds in his right hand.

His companion, a Chinese female, sustained lacerations in the right neck, right cheek, below the eyelid, and on the bridge of her nose.

Both victims were treated at the Commonwealth Health Center and later released.

"Identities of the victims are withheld [as] the case is under investigation," said Department of Public Safety spokesman Eric David.

He said the victims described the suspects as possibly locals.

David said one was described as wearing a red shirt with eyeglasses.

On Tuesday at 1:57am, police responded to a call from CHC about victims of assault with a dangerous weapon incident. Police officers met the Chinese couple who were being treated at CHC's emergency room.

David said that officers learned from one of the victims that he had received a call from a male individual asking for transportation assistance.

The victims proceeded to Kool Market in Finasisu where they met the suspects. One suspect told the driver to drive them to Han Nam Market in Koblerville.

Upon arriving at Han Nam Market area, one suspect told the driver to park and wait. The suspects then suddenly assaulted them with weapons.

The report did not mention the type of weapons used. It also did not indicate where the suspects went after beating up the two. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

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PSS says it provided therapy to Oleai special student

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Contrary to the allegations of a parent of a special student in Oleai Elementary School, the CNMI Public School System said it fulfilled its duty to provide the needed services for the student's needs.

Acting special education coordinator Suzanne Lizama said an individualized education program was developed for the child on Dec. 15, 2008, which included twice a month 30-minute occupational therapy services, for a total of 600 minutes per school year.

In a review of the related services log sheets for school year 2008-2009 and based on the occupational therapy monthly reports, Lizama said the records indicate that Fe Abonal, PSS occupational therapist, provided 615 minutes of occupational therapy services to Allan Vila's daughter, from September 2008 to May 2009.

In a complaint he filed with the Commissioner of Education in October this year, Vila accused PSS of not fulfilling its duty to serve the needs of special children, based on the experience of his daughter who is enrolled in Oleai Elementary School's third grade.

In a letter to Vila, Lizama said records indicate that four hours of occupational therapy and speech language services were provided to Oleai school on four occasions: Oct. 25, 2008; Nov. 11, 2008; May 2, 2009, and May 9, 2009.

Lizama said Vila's daughter did not avail of these services offered at her school.

"School log sheets and monthly reports are available in the special education office for review. Therefore, no compensatory occupational therapy is required at this time as occupational therapy was provided in accordance with the IEP," Lizama told Vila.

For this school year, PSS said that Vila's daughter will receive 800 minutes of compensatory speech and language pathologist services at 30 minutes per week for 26 weeks or 60 minutes per week for 13 weeks.

These services started on Nov. 1, 2009, *Saipan Tribune* learned.

Vila earlier disclosed that his daughter is suffering due to the school's lack of services for her special needs. The student has pervasive developmental disorder and constantly needs the service of qualified experts in the field.

Villa said his family was forced to send their daughter to a Philippine hospital last year to make sure she avails of the services of a neurologist, pediatric neurologist, and a general doctor. It cost the family about $6,000.

CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulation to my only brother, Joseph Robert T. Sablan! I just wanted to send my love, support, and congratulations to you in accomplishing your goals and achieving your bachelor's degree at the University of Guam. Continue to strive for the best in life because before you realize it, it is all a matter of time when everything pays off on its own. I'm many miles away from you but remember you are always in my thoughts and prayers. Congratulations again and I love you Bro. Greetings come from your baby sister EI, here in Washington.

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BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT

Happy birthday to Marion John Sayas, who is celebrating his fifth birthday today, Dec. 31! Greetings come from Mario, Chielo, Marchie and MK Sayas.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

OH HAPPY DAY!

Happy 34th wedding anniversary to Mr. & Mrs. Theodore Ngewakl! May the Dear Lord continue to bless your marriage today, always, and forever! We all love you both very much! Greetings come from your loving kids, daughter-in-laws and most especially all your grandkids.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

GOVERNMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NOTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS BEFORE THE COMMISIONER OF INSURANCE.

JOHN HANCOCK LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY
Applicant

In the Matter of the Application for Withdrawal and to Permanently Discontinue the Transaction of Insurance Business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Pursuant to 20 NMIAC §20-40. 1-210

Notice is hereby given that John Hancock Life Insurance Company of 601 Congress Street, Boston, Massachusetts 02210, intends to withdraw and to permanently discontinue the transaction of insurance business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Effective December 31, 2009, John Hancock Life Insurance Company will cease to exist as a separate entity as a result of a merger with its affiliate, John Hancock Life Insurance Company (U.S.A.), which is the surviving insurer.

All persons interested in this matter should write to the Company at the above address or call 617-663-2486 or the Office of the Commissioner of Banking and Insurance, Department of Commerce at Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. 664-3000.

Northern Mariana Islands RETIREMENT FUND

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC, Division 9, §9910, Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Eloy S. Inos, through the NMI Retirement Fund Board of Trustees/Workers' Compensation Commission/Group Health & Life Insurance Trust Fund, are hereby giving notice that the Board of Trustees will hold its ***Special*** meeting **Monday, January 04, 2010 at 10:00 a.m.** at the **NMI Retirement Fund Conference Room, Saipan.**

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
- **A. Call to Order**
- **B. Roll Call**
- **C. Adoption of Agenda**

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS

III. OLD BUSINESS
1. **Life Insurance RFP Update**
   - **a. RFP**
   - **b. Claims**
2. **Civil Action No. 09-0021**
3. **Civil Action No. 09-0023**
4. **BR 08-001**

IV. NEW BUSINESS
1. **Health Insurance**
   - **a. Proposed Coverage**
   - **b. Regulations**

V. EXECUTIVE SESSION

VI. MISCELLANEOUS
- **A. Announcements**
- **B. Next Meeting**
- **C. Adjournment**

/s/ SIXTO K. IGISOMAR
CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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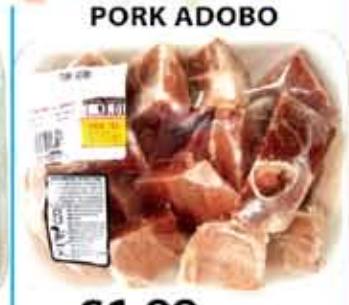

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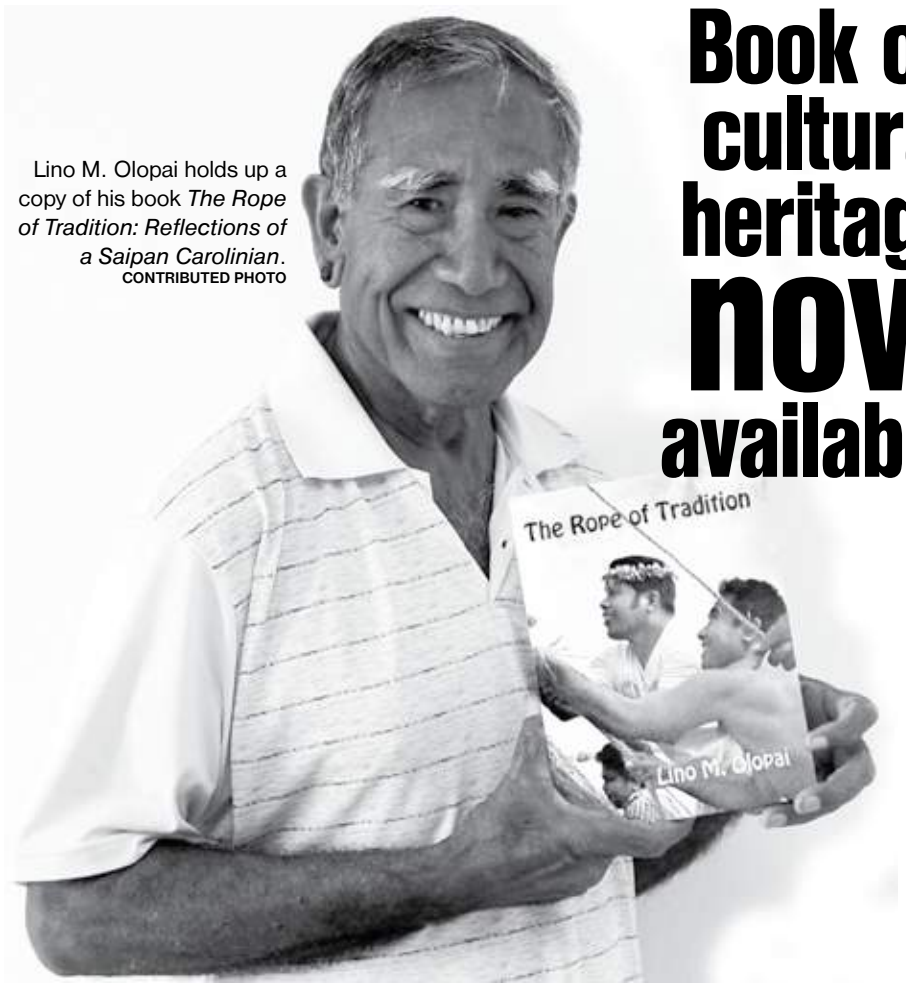


Lino M. Olopai holds up a copy of his book *The Rope of Tradition: Reflections of a Saipan Carolinian*.
CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

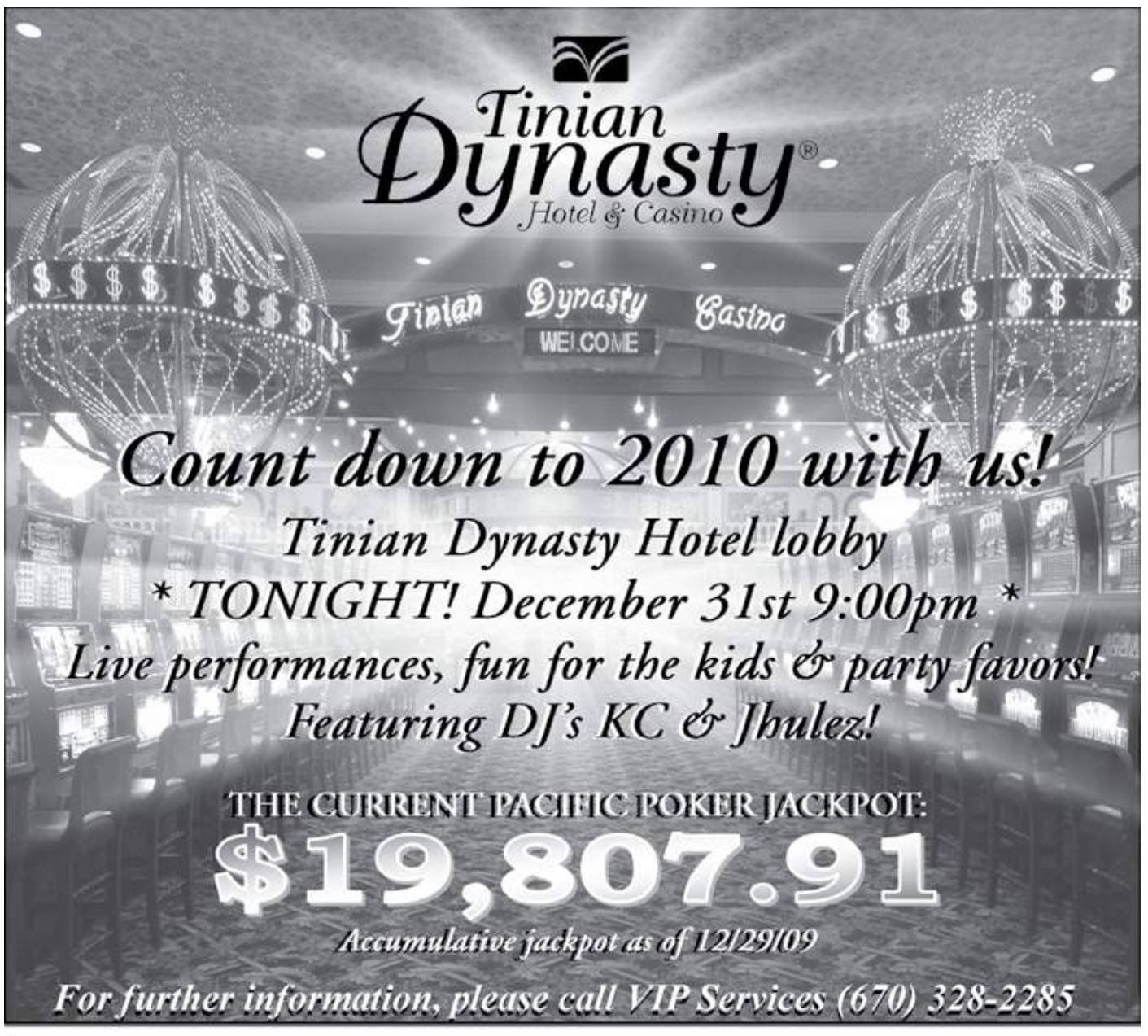
The NMI Council for the Humanities announced yesterday the availability of *The Rope of Tradition: Reflections of a Saipan Carolinian* by Lino M. Olopai.

The 258-page book, profusely illustrated with colored and black and white photos, was originally published by the Council in 2005 under its Micronesian Authors' Initiative. The initial print run quickly sold out and the Council recently arranged for its reprinting to meet popular demand.

The Rope of Tradition documents Olopai's lifelong efforts to document and better understand his rich cultural heritage and to seek a balance between traditional ways and the demands of the modern world. It is a must read for anyone interested in indigenous Micronesian cultures and the issues and challenges confronting cultural preservation in the face of rapid globalization.

The book may be purchased at the Council's office in Springs Plaza, Gualo Rai, from 8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday. The book is priced at $18 per volume.

Those wishing more information about the book are invited to contact Council staff at 235-4785.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Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Dec. 31, 1998

Year-end report: Is paradise lost?

In a downtown tourist strip where hordes of people used to descend on a beehive of stores and hotels, Mary Anne's clothes shop remains one of the few that is still surviving by the day through the hard times gripping Saipan. Standing outside, she tries to wave passers-by streaming through the sidewalk into her store, its glass facade plastered with cardboard signs announcing sales discount of up to 50 percent. But few take notice or buy. If business remains bad, Mary Anne says she has no choice but to close shop like hundreds of others which have folded up in recent months on the sidelines of the worst economic contagion to hit this once bustling Pacific island paradise.

Year-end report: Health-care system, 1998

The delivery of health care is the largest ticket item on any government's budget and the NMI is no exception. As demands for more health care delivery expands by leaps and bounds, the local health care system finds itself in a bind when austerity measures came into effect this year. It meant more for less. Although the Department of Health and Environmental Services is one of three most important government agencies, it too suffered budgetary cuts when the administration imposed a 13.4 across the board reduction in departmental fund allocations. The department's budget was reduced from $41 million in fiscal year 1998 to $33.9 million for the current fiscal year. The money contraction included severe cuts in medical supplies from $3.5 million in FY '98 to $982,000 although there's $2 million in Imprest Fund for emergency medication.

Dec. 31, 1999

Y2K bug: 'Don't panic. Be prepared'

With few hours before the New Year, government agencies are on top of the situation as they assure island residents of continuous service and uninterrupted utilities during the rollover into 2000. But experts advice the people to stock up on food, bottled water, candles and batteries; keep some cash on hand; and have emergency kits ready for the next few days just in case of any problem triggered by the so-called millennium bug. "The important thing is not to panic. It's not a bad idea to go ahead and prepare the basic necessities that will last for at least three to five days," said Tony Calvo, operations chief of the Y2K Task Force set up by the government.

House bill eyes CNMI-wide recycling plan

The House of Representatives has begun steps to create an island-wide program aimed at promoting recycling of trash as well as reducing solid waste dumped in landfills by imposing disposal fees on materials being imported into the CNMI. Under House Bill 11-501 called the Commonwealth Recycling Act of 1999, the government will assess these fees on top of other government taxes to ensure that their disposal will be taken care of.The legislation, sponsored by Reps. Manuel A. Tenorio and Heinz S. Hofschneider, was passed by the lower house Wednesday and now heads to the Senate for action.

Dec. 31 2001

2002: Bumpy year for NMI tourism

The adverse effects of the Asian crisis and of the September 11 crash attacks on the United States will remain as the biggest stumbling blocks to the much hoped-for turnaround of the Northern Marianas tourism industry. The Marianas Visitors Authority is wary that that recession in Japan will not be over in the next few years, noting the need to immediately develop new markets for the local tourism industry, in order to generate revenue both for the government and private businesses.

Search for evasive 'treasure' carries on

"The money is not there." Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio never knew how horrifyingly accurate and how prophetic he was when he said this in July during deliberations for the fiscal year 2002 budget. It would even be a safe presumption to say that Tenorio didn't even know to what extent such a statement would apply. Because, in the aftermath of the 911 attacks, an abyss has literally opened right at the foot of the local economy and revenues are going down at such a fast clip that the finance department has been reduced to making weekly projections, instead of long-term annual forecasts. The free fall in government revenue has taken a deep bite on the Fiscal Year 2002 spending package, putting into question the government's capacity to continue providing services at current levels.

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
Volume XIX, Issue No. 315

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Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP 96950

Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
Mark Rabago ASSISTANT EDITOR

MEMBER
The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Securing the skies

Thank goodness Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano backed off her assertions that "the system worked" in the attempted downing of Northwest Flight 253 from Amsterdam to Detroit. Her claim neither passed the laugh test nor was remotely true. Ms. Napolitano's acknowledgement Monday that the system "failed miserably" is the first step on the long road to plugging the troubling security gaps that have been exposed.

Alleged bomber Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab should never have been allowed to fly. We'll come back to the failure of communication that let him get past the first tier of airport security another time. Right now our concern is over how Mr. Abdulmutallab, with a lethal explosive sewn into his underwear, was able to get on board the aircraft.

The Transportation Security Administration is not keen on discussing the security procedures it employs at foreign airports. But attention has focused on the use of scanning technology that could have identified the pentaerythritol tetranitrate (PETN) that Mr. Abdulmutallab was hiding. The New York Times reported that a Dutch airport official said that the millimeter wave-imaging machines that allow security officials to see through a passenger's clothing were prohibited for use on travelers to the United States. The TSA says that is not the case. Either way, it's clear that passengers on U.S.-bound flights are not being scanned. Whenever possible, they should be.

At U.S. airports—as at those abroad—the use of scanners raises questions of resources. There are 40 millimeter wave-imaging scanners in use, but only six are for primary screening. Thirty-four are used for secondary screening, when a passenger is identified for a more thorough search. Going through the screeners is optional. Those who opt out get an additional screening that could include a full-body pat down. The TSA has ordered 150 backscatter scanners, which produce a chalk-like image. It plans to order 300 other scanners over the next year. Congress and the White House have to find the money to fund as many of these machines as are needed to safeguard aircraft and air passengers.

There are other steps Congress can quickly take; let's start with two. One would be for Sen. Jim DeMint, R-S.C. to release his hold on the nomination of Erroll Southers to lead the TSA. Not having a leader at the agency now hurts the nation as well as the administration. Another step would be for Congress to reject legislation to limit the use of advanced scanning. We understand the privacy concerns at issue; for some, a full-body scan is akin to a strip search. But the failure of Mr. Abdulmutallab's alleged attack is one close call too many. Concerns about privacy must be balanced with law enforcement's ability to meet the terrorist threat with tools that work.

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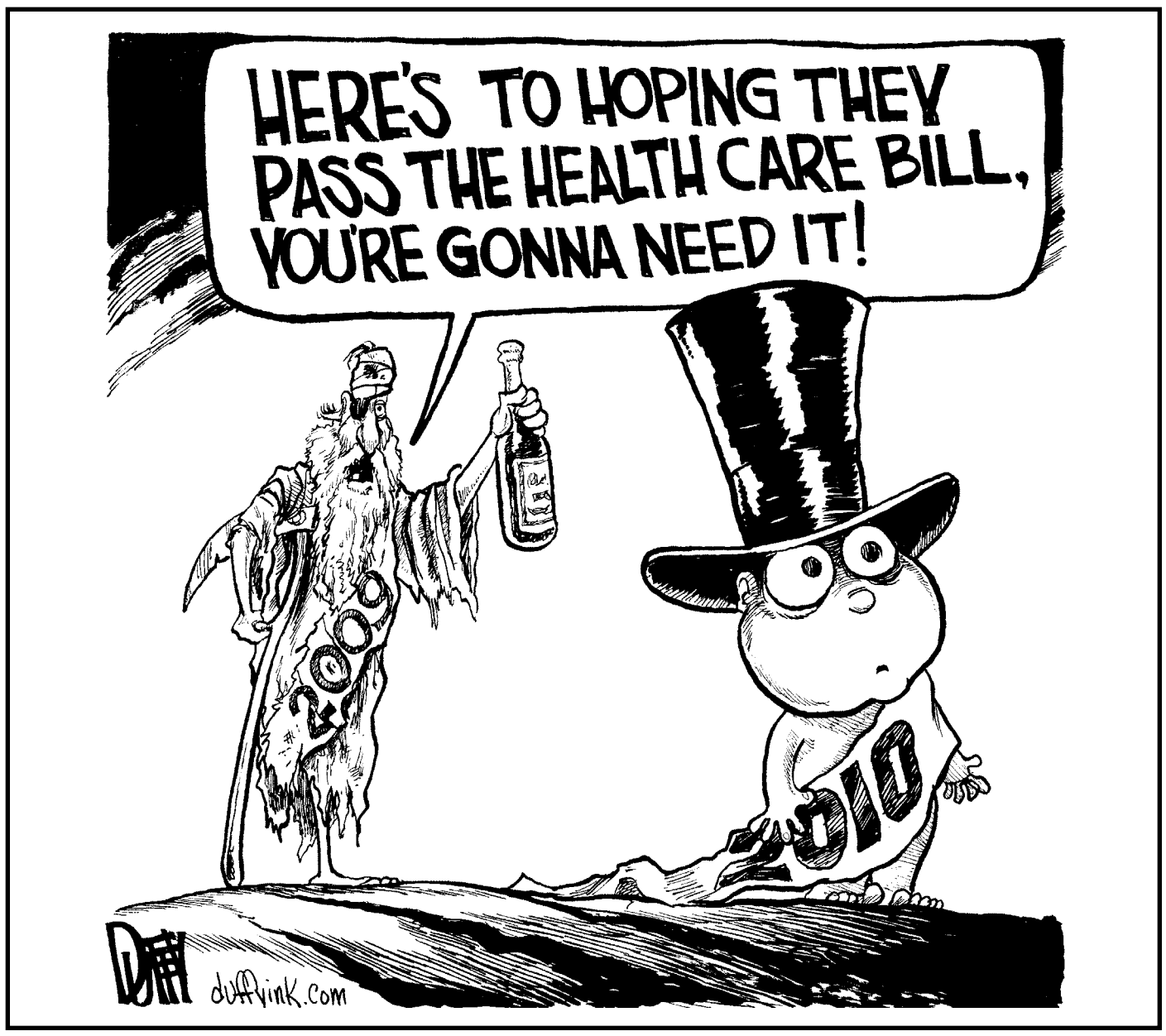


Resolution solution

"When we are motivated by goals that have deep meaning, by dreams that need completion, by pure love that needs expressing, then we truly live life."—Greg Anderson

By RIK and JANEL VILLEGAS
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Rik is a business instructor at NMC and Janel is a partner with BizResults, LLC. They can be contacted at biz_results@yahoo.com.

The New Year marks the advent of a brighter future for those who have dreams. For many it is a reflective time to evaluate past accomplishments and plan for the future. However, millions will make resolutions only to have them dashed in a few days or weeks when reality collides with their hopes.

If you take a look at the word "resolution" it's derived from the word "re-solve," or to solve again. That's just what most people try to do each year—solve the same old problems and challenges again and again each year. It doesn't matter whether it's losing more weight, making more money, or learning a new skill; unless you do something different, you'll be dealing with the same problems next year.

What differentiates those with broken resolutions from those who actually get things done? For one thing, turn your resolutions into specific and actionable goals. State the exact outcome you plan to achieve, and then follow the A.B, C factors of Accountability, Behaviors, and Control to make sure your goals are accomplished. These three factors will greatly boost your ability to accomplish your goals and begin to live the life you dream of.

Accountability means you should set goals you can be held accountable to accomplish. The first commitment you'll make is to yourself. Make a promise that you will persevere until the goal is reached. Motivational speaker, Zig Ziglar said: *"A goal that is casually set and lightly taken will be freely abandoned at the first obstacle."*

In a Harvard study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, 811 subjects where involved in a two-year study of four different diet strategies to lose weight. The researchers discovered that all the diets were equally successful, but one factor was very strongly associated with success—attendance to group counseling sessions. These subjects were accountable to others for their results.

Accountability is a powerful motivational force, and there are four levels: 1) accountability to self, 2) accountability to another person such as a coach or partner, 3) accountability to a group such as the weight counseling sessions, and 4) accountability to the general public.

Behaviors are the actionable changes you'll need to make. In other words, you will need to change some things you are doing now and adopt new behavioral patterns that are consistent with the results you want to achieve. Once you know the specific outcome you want to achieve, it will be easier to identify the specific action steps you will need to start doing or do more of in order to realize the outcome.

This can include any of the following for behavioral changes: 1) start doing something that you currently aren't doing, 2) do more of what you're already doing, 3) do less of what you're now doing, or 4) completely stop doing whatever it is you're doing now. For example, if you want to lose weight then you could begin by implementing the following behavioral changes: 1) start an exercise program, 2) eat more vegetables, 3) less fats and sugars, and 4) stop going back for second portions of food.

Changing your behavior is one of the more difficult things to do because people are creatures of habit. However, if you truly want better results, you must take consistent action and change your habitual behaviors.

Control is the fourth function of management after planning, organizing, and leading. Control means to monitor the results of your actions on a regular basis and compare the results to your predetermined expectations. For example, if you're trying to lose weight, then get on the scales once a week and record your weight. If you want to lose 24 pounds in 12 weeks, then you should see a two-pound weight loss every week and document your actual weight to determine if you are on target.

It is absolutely essential to get regular feedback and know if you are on track or need to make adjustments to get back on track. Resolutions and goals are likely to fail if you don't regularly monitor your activities or have prescheduled times when you check your progress and report it to someone or a group (accountability).

Implementing the A, B, C's to your goals will dramatically boost your results and keep your yearly resolutions from coming back next year to haunt you. Instead, you'll be motivated by goals that allow you to truly live life.

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Article XII: A brief summary of its history and provisions

By HOWARD P. WILLENS and DEANNE C. SIEMER
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Editor's Note: This article was submitted for publication by the Committee to Change Article XII, with permission from the authors. Due to its length, it is being published here as a four-part series.

Second of a four-part series

Lawyers for both the Northern Marianas and the United States delegations believed that by careful drafting it might be possible to develop a program of land restrictions that could withstand constitutional challenges under Article 4 or the 14th Amendment. But the two delegations took very different positions with respect to how best to implement any such general objective of restricting land transactions in order to protect the Northern Marianas people.

The Marianas Political Status Commission position was very simple. The Northern Marianas people wanted to become U.S. citizens; they wanted to protect their land from being bought up by outsiders; and they felt that this was a matter that their own Constitutional Convention could deal with after the status relationship with the United States had been approved by the people and the U.S. Congress.

The United States delegation took a very different position. They believed that the Northern Marianas people were especially vulnerable to exploitation by outsiders. They did not want to leave this matter to be handled by the Northern Marianas Constitution Convention. Instead they wanted the Covenant that was being negotiated to *require* that such land restrictions be imposed in the Northern Mariana Islands in order to preclude the ultimate disposition of the land as it had occurred in Guam and Hawaii.

The parties were unable to reach a compromise on this issue until the very last session of the negotiations in December 1974. Under this compromise, the Northern Marianas is required to impose limitations on the transfer of land for 25 years after termination of the Trusteeship. The Northern Marianas *may* continue such restrictions after the 25 years have passed. The details of the limitations were left to the Northern Marianas Constitutional Convention.

The choice of 25 years was an arbitrary one. The negotiators generally thought that after 25 years the Northern Marianas people would have acquired the necessary sophistication to deal with outside investors. Yet the period was short enough so that the people could re-examine in a timely manner the need for such restrictions in light of their overall impact on local families and culture.

This compromise was embodied in Section 805 of the Covenant, signed in February 1975, and later approved by the Northern Marianas people and the U.S. Congress. The mandatory element of Section 805 means that the Commonwealth must impose land restrictions for 25 years after the termination of the Trusteeship Agreement. Because the Trusteeship ended in 1986, these restrictions must last at least until the year 2011. The permissive aspect of Section 805 means that the Commonwealth may continue or end the restrictions after 2011.

The first Northern Marianas Constitutional Convention in 1976 had to implement Section 805 of the Covenant. It did address several basic questions. These included the definition of Northern Marianas descent, the length of the restrictions, and procedures for changing the restrictions.

But many other complicated questions were raised during the Convention's debate on land restrictions. Even if sales to outside investors were prohibited, the Convention delegates had to consider what kind of long-term leases would be permitted so as to attract the outside investment necessary for economic development. The application of land restrictions had to be considered. Alternative methods of enforcing the restriction had to be evaluated. The Convention's resolution of all these issues is found in Article XII.

The issues related to Article XII were some if the most complex questions considered by the Constitutional Convention. The 39 delegates to the Convention had been elected on a non-partisan basis, but politics did naturally come into play when voters went to select them. The Territorial Party had a significant majority in the Convention and filled all the leadership positions, with Lorenzo I. Guerrero serving as Convention President.

Section 4 of Article XII defines the term Northern Marianas descent. It provides that a person of Northern Marianas descent is a U.S. citizen or national who is at least one-fourth Northern Marianas Chamorro or Northern Marianas Carolinian blood, or a combination thereof.

Superb navigators, Carolinian sailors had discovered a route from the Caroline Islands to the Marianas many centuries before. In the early 19th century, Carolinians obtained permission from Spanish authorities to settle in the unpopulated Northern Mariana Islands. Later in the century, Chamorros from Guam were also permitted to settle there. Residing principally on Saipan, these early immigrants and those who followed were the ancestors of virtually all the local people of the Northern Marianas after World War II.

In defining Northern Marianas descent, the Convention delegates had three basic objectives. First they wanted to minimize the risk of constitutional challenge to their work by making certain that they used a basis other than race as a starting point. Second, they recognized the uncertainties involved in any such restrictions and wanted to make sure that any problem that developed could be addressed in a timely manner. Third, they wanted to be fair to family members who were not Carolinian or Chamorro.

The Convention had to establish a starting point for Article XII by defining those persons who would be considered a 100 percent Northern Marianas decent when section 805 of the Covenant and Article XII became effective. The effective date was the beginning of the constitutional government in January 1978. The Convention delegates were not seeking to invalidate land sales approved by the Trust Territory administration under existing rules. All those transactions would continue to be valid after the constitution came into effect.

The Convention defined a person as 100 percent Northern Marianas descent who was born or do domiciled in the Northern Mariana Islands by 1950. In 1950 virtually all persons in the Northern Marianas were Carolinian and Chamorros. All of the aliens that the Japanese had bought to the islands were repatriated by 1946 by the U.S. military. From that point forward, the Navy and Interior Department severely restricted entry to the islands except for a limited period and for an approved purpose. This aspect of the definition therefore excluded persons born in Guam, the United States, the Philippines, or elsewhere unless they were domiciled in the Northern Marianas by 1950.

The second part of the definition required that the person be citizen of the Trust Territory before termination of the Trusteeship. This requirement operated to exclude United States, Japanese, Philippines or other non-Trust Territory citizens, even if they had been born or domiciled in Northern Mariana Island by 1950.

To be continued tomorrow.

Letters to the Editor

NMC lies and demise

I was saddened to read about the non-renewal of Sam McPhetres and resignation of Judy Torres at NMC. I know there are many good instructors and administrators who have left the college or were not renewed because of disagreements with President Fernandez.

Under President Fernandez's leadership, the quality of education at NMC has declined considerably. She really does not care about students who want to get a high quality education because she has driven out good instructors who are excellent with students, and she and the administration allow some courses to be taught by instructors whose major field of study is not related to the course they are teaching. For example, they hired a person with a bachelor's degree in sociology to teach physical science. They are running the college like an elementary school because they think anybody can teach any subject, regardless of his or her educational background.

President Fernandez does not have an educational philosophy or any clue about academic standards and academic integrity. She once asked me to change a student's grade. She tried to use students and parents for her survival and neglected instructors. Even though she was kind to me at first, when I tried to communicate that there was something wrong, she rejected it. Without notice, I was forced to resign in the middle of the semester because I spoke up about what I felt was right. My attempt to resolve the matter was rejected by Dr. Fernandez and the Employee Appeals Committee. They gave no response, and I had to finally give up waiting for a response from them because I had to leave the island due to financial matters. NMC has paid costly settlements to others for personnel matters, and they had to indemnify me also.

I have contacted WASC and some other places about my situation and findings. The president is afraid of new knowledge, wisdom, change and innovation. To me, the NMC management is *not* for students, but is looking out for its own survival, *using* students and politics. If the CNMI wants a college that effectively prepares students for the modern world, then NMC needs to have a change in its management and philosophy.

Dr. S. Kim
Former NMC instructor
Seoul, South Korea

No short cuts

Which part of "no short cuts to citizenship or permanent residency" do the nonresident guest workers do not understand? Why does Wendy Doromal continue her quest to garner such support from U.S. Congress? Wasn't it the U.S. Congress that passed a law phasing out the foreign guest workers in our homeland due to national security and border control issues?

We believe that Public Law 110-229 has done its job by ending all forms of labor abuse, human smuggling and exploitation concerns by some members of U.S. Congress who pushed passage of such a law. We doubt that our indigenous people are ignorant enough to allow the granting of green cards or permanent residency across the board for it will be to our own future generations' detriment, ultimately affecting our culture and social well-being as native Chamorros and Carolinians of the land.

The other question is, are those signatures from local U.S. residents, voters or taxpayers? If not, our people must not forget that we are in political union with the United States and any major or drastic change to be made by U.S. Congress would require "mutual consent" on both parties. To grant such permanent residency or green cards across the board would blatantly contradict the intent of Public law 110-229, which is national security and border control concerns in the Marianas.

Our people need to think hard about the future generations of our homeland. Where would they be in the long run?

Gregorio Cruz Jr.
Taotao Tano CNMI Inc.

At a crossroads

Northern Marianas College is at a crossroads. The students are up in arms, and the faculty is in near open revolt, over the way that things are being run. The leadership of our college no longer seems to have the confidence that it should have. I don't know of any other public college or university in the USA where the president claims to be able to rule so arbitrarily or have so little accountability. The situation is compounded by a Board of Regents that, with one courageous exception, appears to be willing to let the situation continue to deteriorate. This just isn't right.

As far as I am concerned, the most important attribute of a college or university is academic freedom. When respected professors can be dismissed for no apparent reason at all, and when the leadership of the institution does not see fit to explain why it fails to respect this hallowed principle, and when its trustees sit on their hands and do nothing, then something is very wrong here.

We need a college of which we can all be proud, one which serves the needs of the people of the Northern Marianas. In order to have this, the Board of Regents needs dynamic leadership, one that is not afraid to assert itself and make sure that the college is being run properly—not micromanaging but simply exercising its responsibilities as trustees of this critical public institution. There is no reason why the people of the Northern Marianas should have to settle for mediocrity in anything, let alone an institution that, if properly run, can offer so much to us and to our future.

I urge the Board of Regents to take immediate, positive steps to change our course, to do whatever is necessary and appropriate to keep our college from continuing its slide down that slippery slope to failure and ridicule. At this critical juncture, we need real leadership from the Board of Regents.

Michael A. White
Dandan, Saipan

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly cloudy. Northeast winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy. Northeast winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy. Northeast winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼76°	▲86° ▼76°	▲86° ▼76°	▲86° ▼76°	▲86° ▼76°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Partly Sunny	▲83	▼75
Palau	Showers	▲85	▼77
Yap	Partly Sunny	▲89	▼77
Chuuk	Cloudy	▲89	▼79
Pohnpei	Partly Sunny	▲87	▼78
Kosrae	Showers	▲88	▼76
Majuro	Thunderstorms	▲83	▼79

Around The Globe

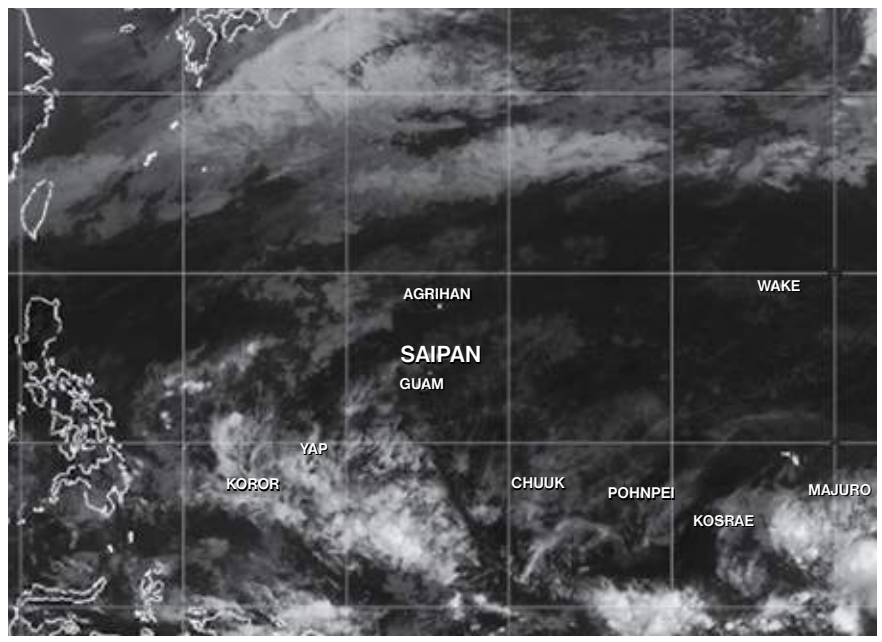
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	▲68	▼61
Beijing	Cold	▲19	▼18
Hong Kong	Showers	▲63	▼61
Honolulu	Cloudy	▲79	▼68
London	Cloudy	▲41	▼32
Los Angeles	Partly Sunny	▲68	▼50
Manila	Mostly Sunny	▲86	▼72
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	▲91	▼67
Miami	Cloudy	▲80	▼65
New York	Rain/Snow	▲38	▼34
Osaka	Snow	▲36	▼28
Paris	Showers	▲45	▼36
Pusan	Mostly Sunny	▲33	▼18
Rome	Showers	▲58	▼49
Salem	Rain	▲49	▼41
San Francisco	Mostly Cloudy	▲57	▼51
Seoul	Partly Sunny	▲14	▼ 9
Tokyo	Partly Sunny	▲38	▼28
Washington, DC	Frozen Rain	▲42	▼36

Tides

Saipan Harbor

12:58 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.7 Feet
8:16 AM	Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet
1:17 PM	Today	Low Tide:	1.4 Feet
6:08 PM	Today	High Tide:	2.1 Feet

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2009

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A nearly stationary front extends east-northeastward from 23N130E through a circulation centered near 24N135E to beyond 25N at 150E. Cloudiness and patchy rain are found southeast of Okinawa or north of a line from 23N130E to 21N136E to 25N150E. A surface trough extends southeastward from 10N130E to EQ141E. Convergent low-level winds are triggering scattered showers and a few thunderstorms near Koror and Yap within 150 miles of a line from 10N134E to 3N147E. Trade-wind convergence is producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms over a broad area spanning eastward from just east of Kosrae across the southern Marshall Islands and Tarawa to beyond the date line or to the east of a line from EQ167E to 7N167E.

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:43 AM	5:57 PM
Friday	6:43 AM	5:58 PM
Saturday	6:43 AM	5:58 PM
Sunday	6:44 AM	5:59 PM
Monday	6:44 AM	5:59 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	5:22 PM	5:50 AM
Friday	6:29 PM	6:52 AM
Saturday	7:35 PM	7:49 AM
Sunday	8:38 PM	8:41 AM
Monday	9:38 PM	9:28 AM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

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- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 22, 2009

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

C09597	11:30am	12:05pm	1, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM

C09597	12:40pm	1:10pm	1, 7

SAIPAN-GUAM

C09317	4:25am	5:15am	Daily
C09313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
C09597	11:30am	1:10pm	1, 7 via ROP
C09601	12:20pm	1:10pm	4, 5
C09603	3:15pm	4:05pm	Daily
C09605	6:20pm	7:10pm	Daily
C09599	9:20pm	10:10pm	Daily

SAIPAN-NAGOYA (NGO)

NW287	6:00am	7:30pm	Daily via NRT

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

NW287	6:00am	8:40am	Daily
NW297	4:45pm	7:30pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:20am	6:50am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ604	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ119	4:00am	11:25am	Daily via Osaka
		Arrive OSA	6:40am, leave OSA 9:30am
OZ606	3:20pm	7:00pm	2, 4, 6, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

FM844	2:50am	5:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

CZ3008	3:30am	6:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ604/701	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ604/701	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ604/703	2:50am	11:25am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ608/705	3:20am	1:30am+1	1, 5 via PUS
C09603/933	3:15pm	9:40pm	Daily via GUM
C09605/933	6:20pm	9:40pm	Daily via GUM
C09599/PR111	9:20pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG

OZ604/721	2:10am	12:00pm	1 via ICN
OZ604/721	2:40am	12:00pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ606/749	3:20pm	11:00pm	4, 6, 7 via ICN

ARRIVALS

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

C09598	3:10am	3:45am	5, 6
C09312	1:20pm	1:55pm	6

GUAM-ROTA (ROP)

C09598	2:00am	2:30am	5, 6
C09312	12:10pm	12:40pm	6

GUAM-SAIPAN

C09316	2:00am	2:50am	1, 2, 3, 4, 7
C09598	2:00am	3:45am	5, 6 via ROP
C09596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
C09600	10:05am	10:55am	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
C09312	12:10pm	1:55pm	6 via ROP
C09602	1:50pm	2:40pm	1, 4, 5, 7
C09604	4:50pm	5:40pm	Daily
C09606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily

NAGOYA (NGO)-SAIPAN

NW288	12:05pm	1:20am+1	Daily via NRT

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

NW298	10:05am	2:50pm	Daily
NW288	8:45pm	1:20am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ605	9:00am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7
OZ120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	Daily via Osaka
		Arrive OSA	8:50pm, leave OSA 9:50pm
OZ603	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

FM843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1, 5

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

CZ3007	7:30pm	2:40am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ716/605	12:30am	2:20pm	4 via ICN
OZ706/607	3:35am	2:10am+1	4, 7 via PUS
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/C09596	10:10pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
C0934/9596	11:10pm	7:50am+1	Daily via GUM
OZ704/605	11:55pm	2:20pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via ICN

HONG KONG-SAIPAN

OZ724/605	12:30am	2:20pm	2,4,6,7 via ICN
OZ750/605	1:00am	2:20pm	2,4,6,7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

NMC to host free information session

Those interested in furthering their education and advancing their professional careers are encouraged to attend the Northern Marianas College's free information session on Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2010, at Room D-1 at the college's As Terlaje campus, from 5:30pm to 7pm.

Faculty, staff, and students from the different degree and certificate programs, as well as counseling, financial aid, and admissions staff will be on hand to answer questions. Other current students will also be speaking about their experiences at NMC.

Individuals who attend the free information session will qualify to have their application fee and their placement test fees waived for the Spring and Summer 2010 semesters. This represents a savings of about $75 for either semester. Participants will also receive personal assistance in filling up application forms and financial aid documents.

NMC offers several degree and certificate programs, including a bachelor of science degree in elementary education, associate degrees in business, liberal arts, nursing, natural resource management, criminal justice, hospitality management, and more. Moreover, it offers short-term certificate programs in different vocational, academic, and professional areas.

The free information session is open to everyone, including graduating seniors and their parents, government and private sector employees, international students, and members of the general public who are interested in learning more about the programs at NMC. ***(NMC)***

NMC English and Math placement test schedule

The Northern Marianas College will be conducting the English and Math placement tests on the following dates:

English Placement Test Schedule

Jan. 5: 1pm – 4pm, Room A-6
Jan. 7: 5pm – 8pm, Room D-1
Jan. 12: 9am – 12pm, Room A-6
Jan. 13: 1pm – 4pm, Room A-6
Jan. 14: 5pm – 8pm, Room A-6
Jan. 15: 9am – 12pm, Room A-6

Math Placement Test Schedule

Jan. 5: 10am – 12pm, Room A-9
5pm – 7pm, Room A-9
Jan. 7: 10am – 12pm, Room A-9
5pm – 7pm, Room A-9
Jan. 12: 10am – 12pm, Room A-9
Jan. 14: 5pm – 7pm, Room A-9

Those who wish to take courses at NMC must take the placement tests. Registration for NMC's Spring 2010 semester will begin on Monday, Jan. 11, 2010.

There is a $25 fee for each placement test that must be paid in advance at the NMC Cashier (Monday-Friday, 8:30am - 4pm). No one will be allowed into the testing room without proof of payment (a receipt for the placement test fee, or the NMC application fee). Payment for the application fee will cover the English placement test fee.

ON THE NET
www.nmcnet.edu

Test takers must bring a valid photo ID (driver's license, passport or school ID) and pencils. No admittance to the testing room will be allowed after the starting time.

Calculators may be used when taking the math placement test. NMC students are not allowed to take the math placement test more than once. The only exception to this condition is for NMC students who have NOT taken a math class within one year of taking the math placement test.

If you have any questions about the English placement test, call the Languages & Humanities Department at (670) 234-5498 Ext. 1203 or 1242.

If you have any questions about the math placement test, call the Sciences, Mathematics, Health & Athletics Department at (670) 234-5498 Ext. 1200 or 1212.

For additional information about the placement tests and registration for the Spring 2010 semester, log on to www.nmcnet.edu. ***(NMC)***

NMC clarifies course offering

In a news article regarding Northern Marianas College's recent information session, it was mentioned that the college will be offering new bachelor's of science in education degrees with emphases in special education and early childhood education starting in the Spring 2010 semester.

Although college officials are working to implement these new programs, they will not be offered in the Spring 2010 semester.

The proposal for the programs are slated to be reviewed by the college's shared governance groups and the NMC Board of Regents within the next few months. The proposal will then be submitted for review and approval by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

However, it is important to note that a special education course and an early childhood education course will be offered as electives in the upcoming Spring 2010 semester. ***(NMC)***

SOBRIETY CHECKPOINTS

Saipan sobriety checkpoints

The Department of Public Safety's Traffic Section will be conducting DUI/sobriety checkpoints on Saipan today and tomorrow.

Today, Dec. 31, 2009, the first setup will be on Beach Road Susupe by the Minachom Atdao, from 7:30pm to 8:45pm. The second setup will be on 16 Highway Chalan Kiya by the CUC Water Loo, from 10:30pm to 11:45pm.

On Friday, Jan. 1, 2010, the first setup will be on Beach Road Chalan Laulau by B&R Auto Shop intersection, from 9pm to 10:15pm. The second setup will be on 2W Gualo Rai by the Trans America Building, from 1:30am to 2:45am.

Each checkpoint conducted will last at least 75 minutes (1 hour and 15 minutes) at each location. In addition, traffic officer will be conducting highway criminal interdiction, saturation patrols, aggressive driver interdiction and laser activities.

For more information, contact the Traffic Section Office for Sgt. Paul T. Ogumoro at 664-9085/84. ***(DPS)***

Tinian sobriety checkpoints

The Tinian Department of Public Safety's Traffic Section will be conducting sobriety checkpoints today Dec. 31, 2009, along the Broadway road on the southbound lane next to former Million Poker. The checkpoint will start at 7pm and will end at 8:15pm.

The second checkpoint setup will be on the southbound lane on Broadway road by the Youth Center, from 9pm to 10:15pm.

All sobriety checkpoints will last 75 minutes. For more information, contact Officer Wally F. Villagomez at 433-9222/433-2041. ***(DPS)***

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT

Happy birthday to Joy Malsol, left, shown here with friends Harlee, center, and Jovan! Hope you enjoy your day, may all your wishes come true and may the Lord bless you today and always! Greetings come from your loving family and friends.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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Business

Consumer confidence rises in Dec. but still weak

NEW YORK (AP)—Americans are ending 2009 feeling better about the economy than when the year began, buoyed by optimism that job prospects will improve in the first half of 2010.

Consumer expectations for the job market reached their highest level in two years, but most people remain downbeat about their current prospects, according to a monthly survey released Tuesday. The survey also showed fewer people plan to buy automobiles and homes in the next six months compared with November.

"This doesn't mean that the economy isn't getting better, but it does raise doubts on how much actual improvement in the economy we've actually seen," said Mark Vitner, senior economist for Wells Fargo Securities in Charlotte, N.C.

If past recoveries from recession are a guide, the rebound of confidence will take many more months.

The Conference Board's Consumer Confidence Index rose in December for the second month in a row, to 52.9, from a revised 50.6 in November.

That's slightly higher than the 52.0 prediction of economists surveyed by Thomson Reuters, but still far short of the 90 that would signify a solid economy.

Economists watch the confidence numbers closely because consumer spending on goods and services accounts for about 70 percent of U.S. economic activity as measured by the federal government.

Without a marked turnaround in the job market, consumers will continue to "hunker down" and confidence will remain low, Vitner said.

The unemployment rate dipped in November to 10 percent, from a 26-year high of 10.2 percent in October. Some analysts worry it will start climbing again in coming months, perhaps rising as high as 10.5 percent next summer.

Treasury yields fall after successful bond auction

NEW YORK (AP)—Interest rates dipped in the market for previously issued Treasurys Tuesday after a successful auction of $42 billion of five-year notes.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury note, which is used as a benchmark for interest rates on mortgages and other consumer loans, slipped to 3.80 percent from 3.85 percent Monday. Its price rose 12/32 to 96 17/32 in late trading.

Meanwhile, the yield on previously issued five-year notes fell to 2.57 percent from 2.60 percent. Its price rose 5/32 to 97 31/32.

In the auction, the second big debt sale by the government this week, the measure of demand known as the bid-to-cover ratio was 2.59. That was slightly less than at a similar auction last month, but in line with the recent average, said Matt Freund, vice president of fixed income investments at USAA Investment Management Co.

Demand was good for such a slow week of trading, he said. Many investors are taking vacation this week between Christmas and New Year's Day.

Nokia expands patent dispute beyond Apple iPhone

NEW YORK (AP)—Nokia Corp. is broadening a legal dispute it already has with Apple Inc. over the iPhone, saying almost all of the company's other products also violate the Finnish phone maker's patents.

Nokia said Tuesday that it has filed a complaint against Apple with the U.S. International Trade Commission, alleging Apple's iPhone, iPods and computers all violate Nokia's intellectual property rights.

At issue are key features found in Apple products, including aspects of user interface, cameras, antenna and power management technologies, Nokia said. The company claims that the technologies in question help cut manufacturing costs, reduce gadget size and prolong battery life.

A household name in Asia and Europe, Nokia is a smaller player in the United States, where its smart phones face tough competition from Apple's iPhone and Research in Motion Ltd.'s BlackBerry devices. Nokia, the world's largest cell phone maker, has cautioned that its own market share volume, currently at some 38 percent, would be flat next year.

The company, which is based in Espoo, Finland, has already sued Apple in U.S. District Court in Wilmington, Del., over the massively popular iPhone, claiming it infringes on 10 of its patents related to phone calls and Wi-Fi access.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Oil falls amid reported rise in US inventories

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP)—Oil prices fell slightly Wednesday in Asia amid a surprise rise in U.S. weekly crude inventory ahead of the release of government data. Benchmark crude for February delivery was down 10 cents to $78.77 a barrel at midday Singapore time in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract added 10 cents to settle at $78.87 on Tuesday. Oil has gained for five straight days but traded lower early Wednesday after the American Petroleum Institute reported an increase of 1.725 million barrels in U.S. inventories last week, said Clarence Chu, a trader with Hudson Capital Energy in Singapore.

Outback to pay $19M to settle discrimination suit

DENVER (AP)—Outback Steakhouse has agreed to pay $19 million to female workers and take other steps, including hiring a new human resources executive, to settle a sex discrimination lawsuit. A consent decree describing the settlement between the Tampa-based restaurant chain and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission was filed in U.S. District Court in Denver on Tuesday.

The EEOC filed a lawsuit against Outback there in 2006, claiming that female workers were denied favorable jobs which prevented them from advancing to profit-sharing management positions.

Tylenol Arthritis Caplet voluntary recall expanded

NEW YORK (AP)—Johnson & Johnson is expanding a voluntary recall of Tylenol Arthritis Caplets due to consumer reports of a moldy smell that can cause nausea and sickness. According to a statement posted to the Food and Drug Administration Web site late Monday, the New Brunswick, N.J., company is now recalling all product lots of the Arthritis Pain Caplet 100 count bottles with the red EZ-Open Cap. Johnson & Johnson had recalled five lots of the product last month after consumers complained of a musty, mildew-like odor that triggered nausea, stomach pain, vomiting and diarrhea.

There is no better time than
the holidays to say Thank You
for your patronage. Have a safe
and peaceful New Year to all.
From the management and staff of
Middle Road, Gualo Rai • Tel. 235-8640
Beach Road, San Jose • Tel. 234-6420
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Chicken Leg Quarter LIMIT 2 $20.99 33 LBS. $15.99 22 LBS.

Pork Spareribs LIMIT 2 $15.99 20 LBS.

Baby Ribs LIMIT 2 $15.99 /CASE

Young Whole Chicken LIMIT 2 $33.99 30 LBS.

U.S. Eggs Extra Large $1.99 LIMIT 4 DOZ. /DOZ.

Turkey $1.99 1 LB.

Picnic Smoked Ham/ Gusto Smoked Ham $1.99 1 LB.

Crab $7.99 /LB.

Vega Shrimp $4.99 1 LB. LIMIT 6

Green Mussels $3.99 2 LB. LIMIT 1

Salad Oil $23.99 5 GALLON

Coke (All Flavors) WARM ONLY LIMIT 2 $12.99 /CASE

Pepsi (All Flavors) WARM ONLY $13.99 /CASE

Butane Gas LIMIT 2 CASES $19.99 /CASE

FRESH MEATS • FROZEN FOODS • GROCERY ITEMS • PRODUCE

Beef Knuckle Steak $2.99 /LB.

Flank Steak $17.99 FAMILY BAG

Miller Sausage $14.99 5 LBS.

Chicken Wings $11.99 5 LBS.

Chicken Nuggets $10.99 5 LBS.

Ground Beef $9.99 5 LBS. $16.99 10 LBS.

Beef Rib Finger $2.99 /LB

Ground Pork $2.39 1 LB. $16.99 10 LBS.

Chopped Ham $8.99 5 LBS. $15.99 10 LBS.

Bar S Jumbo Franks $1.09 /PKG LIMIT 2

Bar S Bacon $2.49 /PKG.

Hoffy Portugese Sausage $1.99 /PKG.

Turkey Tail LIMIT 2 $15.99 20 LBS.

Beef Ribeye Steak $15.99 FAMILY BAG

Lamb Shoulder Roll $4.99 1 LB.

Beef Patties $3.99 3 LBS.

Pork Loin Boneless $2.99 1 LB.

Beef Pot Roast $3.25 1 LB.

T-Bone Steak $3.99 /LB.

Beef Top Round Steak $14.99 FAMILY BAG

Mackerel Pike $20.99 22 LBS.

Tilapia 99¢ /LB $37.99 /CASE

Calamary Seawave $1.99 1 LB.

Milkfish $1.49 /LB..

Broccoli $1.99 /LB..

Lettuce $1.59 /LB..

Cabbage 79¢ /LB.

Onion 59¢ /LB.

Garlic (4 pcs.) 89¢ /PACK

Potato (Jumbo) 79¢ /LB.

Orange 89¢ /LB.

Banana 99¢ /LB.

Gala Apple Cello Fuji Apple Cello $3.99 PKG.

Watermelon 79¢ /LB.

CANNED GOODS • BEVERAGES • SNACKS • GROCERY ITEMS

Spam (All Flavors) $2.29 LIMIT 6 CANS

Tulip Luncheon Meat $1.99 LIMIT 6 CANS

Hormel Corned Beef Hash $1.99 LIMIT 6 CANS

Ox & Palm Corned Beef $2.29 LIMIT 6 CANS

Black Label $1.39 LIMIT 6 CANS

Coco Saba $1.29 15 OZ.

Master A1 Tuna 99¢ LIMIT 6 CANS

Ace Diamond Tuna $1.19 LIMIT 6 CANS

Ligo Sardines 3 for $1.00

Century Tuna (All Flavors) 79¢ EACH

Hormel Chili No Beans $1.99

Ichiban $8.99 /BOX

Korean Bowl Noodle (Nong Shim) $7.99 /CASE

Knorr Carb & Corn Soup 60 g. $1.25

Chicken Noodle 99¢

Sugar 99¢ 1 KG. $1.79 2 KG.

Kikkoman $3.99 1.6 L LIMIT 6 BTL.

Kimchee Base $4.99 450G

Lemon Powder $4.99 /CASE

Flour / Rice Stick 99¢

Excellent Rice Stick 99¢ 8 OZ.

Chorizzos $25.99 LIMIT 1

Dragon Oil $6.99 1 GALLON

AVO Vegetable Oil $6.99 1 GALLON

Anchor Fresh Milk $15.99 /CASE

Real Fresh Milk 1 L $19.99 /CASE

Maseca Flour $3.99 5 LBS.

Hungarian Flour $2.75 5 LBS.

Kraft Real Mayo $9.99 1 GALLON

Maggi Magic Sarap Seasoning 12 Sachets/Pack $1.00 /PACK

Datu Puti Vinegar $2.99 1 GALLON

Silver Swan Soy Sauce $2.99 1 GALLON

Folgers Coffee $9.99 33.9 OZ.

Coffee Mix $6.99 LIMIT 1 100 STICKS

Vlassic Dill Pickles $5.99 WHOLE $6.99 SLICE

Seok Water $4.99 /CASE

Cool Aid $7.99 36 QTZ.

Sunkist Juice $5.99 /CASE LIMIT 1

Chamorro Punch $8.99

Zesto Juice (All Flavor) $1.75 10 PCS./BOX

Assam Black Tea $8.99 /CASE

Hite / Max Beer WARM ONLY LIMIT 2 $14.99 /CASE

Budweiser/Bud Light Beer WARM ONLY LIMIT 2 $24.99 /CASE

NON-FOOD

Tide Detergent $3.99 2.8 KG. $6.99 5 KG.

Gain Powder LIMIT 2 $15.99 120 LOADS

Gain Liquid Detergent (All Kind) 50 OZ. $4.99 LIMIT 2

Joy Dishwashing $5.99 90 OZ.

Axxion Foam Plates 125 CT $6.99 LIMIT 1

Diamond Aluminum Foil $6.99 200 SQ. FT.

Luv's Big Box (All Sizes) $17.99 3, 4, 5, 6

Safeguard 90 G 59¢

Bounty Paper Towel $18.99 15 ROLLS

Table Napkin $3.99 400 COUNT

Dawn Dishwashing $7.99 90 OZ.

Charmin Tissue $6.99 24 ROLLS

Toilet Tissue $2.99 10 ROLLS

FAMILY BAG

Pork Hocks	$8.99
Pork Belly	$10.99
Pork Adobo	$9.99
Pork Spareribs	$5.99
Pork Chops	$10.99
Beef Stew	$13.99
Beef Backribs	$7.99
Beef Shortribs	$13.99
Stewing Chicken	$6.99
Quarter Leg s	$5.99

Nation

Obama: US intel had info ahead of airliner attack

HONOLULU (AP)—President Barack Obama said Tuesday that the intelligence community had bits of information that should have been pieced together that would have triggered "red flags" and possibly prevented the Christmas Day attempted terror attack on a Detroit-bound airliner.

His criticism came as senior U.S. officials told The Associated Press that intelligence authorities now are looking at conversations between the suspect in the failed attack, a 23-year-old Nigerian, and at least one al-Qaida member. The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence matters, said the conversations were vague or coded, but the intelligence community believes that, in hindsight, the communications may have been referring to the Detroit attack. One official said a link between the suspect's planning and al-Qaida's goals was becoming more clear.

Obama

The New York Times reported Tuesday that the government had intelligence from Yemen before Christmas that leaders of a branch of al-Qaida there were talking about "a Nigerian" being prepared for a terrorist attack. The newspaper said the information did not include the name of the Nigerian.

The officials who spoke with the AP did not say how these communications with the suspect, Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab, took place—by Internet, cell phone or another method. Intelligence officials also would not confirm whether those conversations involved Yemen-based radical cleric Anwar al-Awlaki, but other U.S. government officials said there were initial indications that he was involved.

Al-Awlaki reportedly corresponded by e-mail with Maj. Nidal Malik Hasan, who is charged with killing 13 people at Fort Hood, Texas, on Nov. 5.

Senior-citizen volunteers fight Medicare fraud

MIAMI (AP)—The first box that arrived at Shirley Shupp's door was filled with braces to help with her arthritis. Then came a motorized scooter, just like the one the 69-year-old already owned. She hadn't asked for any of it—but Medicare was apparently footing the bill.

"There was just something that wasn't right about it," the Houston woman said.

So Shupp contacted her local Senior Medicare Patrol, which did its own research and then referred the matter to investigators. The equipment, worth thousands of dollars, was returned, the case was handed over to prosecutors and the perpetrators were charged with Medicare fraud.

The Senior Medicare Patrol is one of the least-known forces in the government's effort to eliminate such fraud, which drains billions of dollars a year. But it is seen as a valuable part of the Obama administration's bid to overhaul health care and bring down costs.

The 4,700 senior citizen volunteers who serve as the government's eyes and ears have been credited with saving taxpayers more than $100 million since 1997. The program relies on elderly people to apply a lifetime's worth of common sense and skepticism.

"They can tell when something just doesn't feel right to them," said Anne Gray, who works on the SMP program in Santa Ana, Calif.

The patrol, which evolved from another program founded in 1995, now has at least one unit in every state.

SMP sends its volunteers to senior centers, retirement communities and elsewhere to encourage Medicare beneficiaries to guard their personal information, beware of too-good-to-be-true offers on medical equipment and carefully review their benefit statements. The patrol also collects tips on potential scams and fields calls from senior citizens who believe their Medicare accounts have been fraudulently billed.

ACROSS THE NATION

Police: Accused shoplifters cause chaos at Walmart

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. (AP)—Chattanooga police said a couple they believe tried to steal a cart full of TVs and a computer caused chaos at a Walmart. According to a news release, Officer Josh Wright was off duty when he saw a man trying to force his way past a greeter with about $2,000 worth of stolen goods Sunday night. Wright displayed his badge, but the man said it was fake and tried to force his way past him. Wright then tackled the suspect and arrested him. Then the suspect's wife, feigned a heart attack and said she did not know her husband. After a witness told Wright the couple had been together in the store, the wife followed the witness into the parking lot and attacked her. The witness stabbed her in the arm with a pocket knife, and the wife had to be treated at a local hospital.

Vt. judge: Birth mom must give child to ex-partner

MONTPELIER, Vt. (AP)—The birth mother of a 7-year-old Virginia girl must transfer custody of the child to the woman's former lesbian partner, a Vermont judge ruled, adding that it seems the woman has "disappeared" with her daughter. Vermont Family Court Judge William Cohen ordered Lisa Miller of Winchester, Va., to turn over daughter Isabella to Janet Jenkins of Fair Haven at 1 p.m. Friday at the Virginia home of Jenkins' parents. But in the Dec. 22 order denying Miller's request to delay the transfer of Isabella, Cohen wrote: "It appears that Ms. Miller has ceased contact with her attorneys and disappeared with the minor child."

Colo. mom, baby revived after Christmas Eve birth

DENVER (AP)—Mike Hermanstorfer was clutching his pregnant wife's hand in a Colorado hospital on Christmas Eve when she stopped breathing, her life apparently slipping away. Then he cradled his newborn son's limp body seconds after a medical team delivered the baby by Cesarean section. Minutes later he saw his son show signs of life in his arms under the feverish attention of doctors, and soon he learned his wife had inexplicably started breathing again. "My legs went out from underneath me," Hermanstorfer said Tuesday. "I had everything in the world taken from me, and in an hour and a half I had everything given to me."

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World

WORLD BRIEFS

Intel report: Iran seeking to smuggle raw uranium

VIENNA (AP)—Iran is close to clinching a deal to clandestinely import 1,350 tons of purified uranium ore from Kazakhstan, according to an intelligence report obtained Tuesday by The Associated Press. Diplomats said the assessment was heightening international concern about Tehran's nuclear activities. Such a deal would be significant because, according to an independent research group, Tehran appears to be running out of the material, which it needs to feed its uranium enrichment program. The report was drawn up by a member nation of the International Atomic Energy Agency and provided to the AP on condition that the country not be identified because of the confidential nature of the information.

Haqqani network challenges US-Pakistan relations

ISLAMABAD (AP)—The bodies kept surfacing—hanged, shot, beheaded—and always with a note alleging the victims were anti-Taliban spies. "Learn a lesson from the fate of this man," warned one message found on a corpse in Pakistan's North Waziristan tribal region. A senior Pakistani intelligence official told The Associated Press that at least 30 of his agency's operatives have been killed over the past year in the region partly controlled by the al-Qaida-linked Haqqani network. The autonomous Afghan Taliban faction—whose leader was once a U.S. ally—is a serious threat to American and NATO troops in Afghanistan's east and operates on both sides of the border with Pakistan.

'Best Job' winner stung by dangerous jellyfish

ADELAIDE, Australia (AP)—Trouble struck paradise this week when a British man who has the "Best Job in the World" as the caretaker of a tropical Australian island was stung by a potentially lethal jellyfish. Ben Southall—who won a contest to blog for six months about life on Australia's Hamilton Island to promote tourism—wrote Tuesday that he was lucky to have survived his brush with the extremely venomous Irukandji jellyfish. Earlier this week, Southall was getting off a Jet Ski in the ocean when he felt "a small bee-like sting" on his arm.

Yemen investigates Nigerian's al-Qaida contacts

SAN'A, Yemen (AP)—Officials in Yemen were investigating Tuesday whether the Nigerian suspected in the attempted Christmas Day attack on a U.S. airliner spent time with al-Qaida militants in the country in the months leading up to the botched bombing.

Administrators, teachers and fellow students at the San'a Institute for the Arabic Language, where Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab had enrolled to study Arabic, told The Associated Press that he attended school for only the month of Ramadan, which began in late August. That has raised questions about what he did during the rest of his stay, which continued into December.

Abdulmutallab, 23, told U.S. officials after his arrest he received training and instructions from al-Qaida operatives in Yemen, a law enforcement official has said.

According to Yemeni officials, Abdulmutallab spent another extended period in Yemen, from 2004-2005.

People at the school who knew Abdulmutallab said he was not openly extremist, though he expressed anger over Israel's actions against Palestinians in Gaza.

The possibility that he was involved with militants in Yemen has heightened concerns about the largely lawless country that has become an al-Qaida stronghold. Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, a group formed in January when operatives from Saudi Arabia and Yemen merged, claimed responsibility Monday for the attempted attack on the Detroit-bound airliner.

Information Minister Hassan al-Lozy suggested the U.S. was partly to blame for Yemen's failure to identify Abdulmutallab as a terror suspect. He told a news conference Washington never shared its suspicions about the man, who was flagged on a watchlist as a possible terrorist. "We didn't get any notice from the Americans to put this man on a list," al-Lozy said. "America should have told Yemen about this man."

Iranian security forces intensify crackdown

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—Iranian security forces intensified their crackdown on anti-government supporters Tuesday, arresting relatives of the country's Nobel laureate and the main opposition leader, and limiting the movement of another top opposition leader.

Iran also accused the U.S. and Britain of fomenting the recent violence, threatening to "slap" Britain in the face as it summoned the British ambassador to an urgent meeting. Clashes on Sunday left at least eight people dead in a confrontation that has become an increasingly bitter and violent.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad shrugged off Sunday's protests as "a play ordered by Zionists and Americans" and criticized Barack Obama and Britain for allegedly supporting the protesters.

"The Iranian nation has witnessed this sort of play many times," Ahmadinejad said, according to the state IRNA news agency.

Government supporters held rallies in at least three cities on Tuesday, many protesting against the opposition and its leaders.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
PSS RFP 09-039

"Development of a Defensive Driving Training Program for the Public School System"

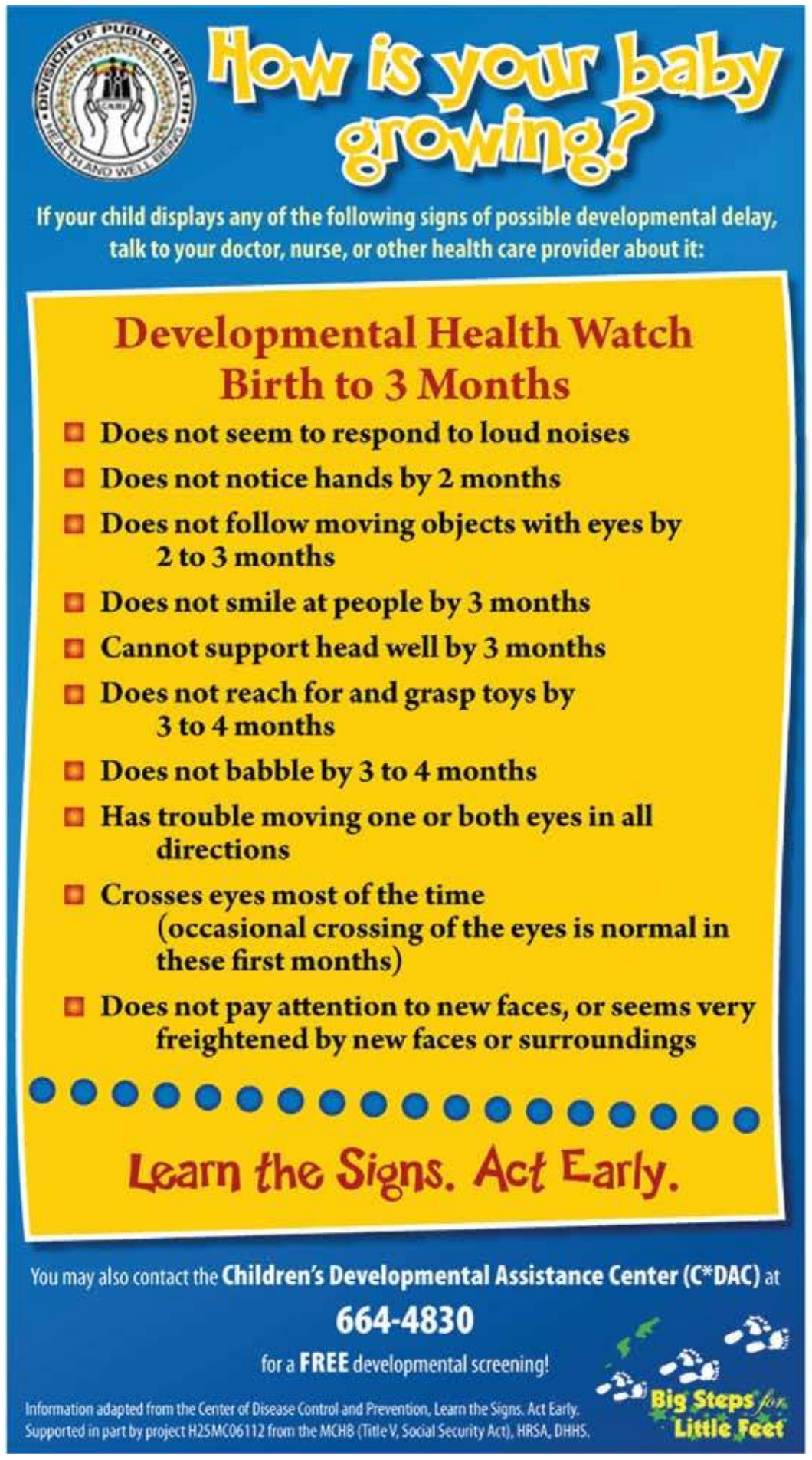
The CNMI Public School System is soliciting competitive sealed proposals for the **"Development of a Defensive Driving Training Program which will include the Training of 34 Bus Drivers, Development of a Curriculum, and the Identification and Training of at Least 5 Trainers".** The Scope of Work and Proposal Package is available beginning December 18, 2009 at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, CNMI or by E-mail request to delacruzr@pss.cnmi.mp.

There will be a Pre-Proposal Meeting for Interested Proposers on Wednesday, January 6, 2010 at 9:30 A.M. in the 3rd Floor Conference room in the NMI Retirement Fund Building. Arrangements can be made to accommodate off-island Proposers via Video Conferencing participation. Questions may be faxed to Peter Le'au, Associate Commissioner for Administration at 670.664.3791 or e-mailed to leaupi@gmail.com **no later than January 11, 2009.**

Proposals shall be in a sealed envelope marked "PSS RFP 09-039" containing (1) original and three (3) copies and submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office **no later than January 15, 2010 at 10:00 A.M. Saipan Time (Chamorro Standard Time)** E-mail submission may be directed to delacruzr@pss.cnmi.mp. Any proposal submitted after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstances.

Si Rita A. Sablan, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education

Si Robert Florian
P&S Officer


How is your baby growing?
If your child displays any of the following signs of possible developmental delay, talk to your doctor, nurse, or other health care provider about it:
Developmental Health Watch
Birth to 3 Months
Does not seem to respond to loud noises
Does not notice hands by 2 months
Does not follow moving objects with eyes by 2 to 3 months
Does not smile at people by 3 months
Cannot support head well by 3 months
Does not reach for and grasp toys by 3 to 4 months
Does not babble by 3 to 4 months
Has trouble moving one or both eyes in all directions
Crosses eyes most of the time (occasional crossing of the eyes is normal in these first months)
Does not pay attention to new faces, or seems very freightened by new faces or surroundings
Learn the Signs. Act Early.
You may also contact the Children's Developmental Assistance Center (C*DAC) at
664-4830
for a FREE developmental screening!
Information adapted from the Center of Disease Control and Prevention, Learn the Signs. Act Early.
Supported in part by project H25MC06112 from the MCHB (Title V, Social Security Act), HRSA, DHHS.
Big Steps for Little Feet

Environment

Arctic could face warmer and ice-free conditions

There is increased evidence that the Arctic could face seasonally ice-free conditions and much warmer temperatures in the future.

Scientists documented evidence that the Arctic Ocean and Nordic Seas were too warm to support summer sea ice during the mid-Pliocene warm period (3.3 to 3 million years ago). This period is characterized by warm temperatures similar to those projected for the end of this century, and is used as an analog to understand future conditions.

The U.S. Geological Survey found that summer sea-surface temperatures in the Arctic were between 10 to 18°C (50 to 64°F) during the mid-Pliocene, while current temperatures are around or below 0°C (32°F).

Examining past climate conditions allows for a true understanding of how Earth's climate system really functions. USGS research on the mid-Pliocene is the most comprehensive global reconstruction for any warm period. This will help refine climate models, which currently underestimate the rate of sea ice loss in the Arctic.

Loss of sea ice could have varied and extensive consequences, such as contributions to continued Arctic warming, accelerated coastal erosion due to increased wave activity, impacts to large predators (polar bears and seals) that depend on sea ice cover, intensified mid-latitude storm tracks and increased winter precipitation in western and southern Europe, and less rainfall in the American west.

ON THE NET

- www.usgs.gov
- http://micropress.org/stratigraphy/

"In looking back 3 million years, we see a very different pattern of heat distribution than today with much warmer waters in the high latitudes," said USGS scientist Marci Robinson. "The lack of summer sea ice during the mid-Pliocene suggests that the record-setting melting of Arctic sea ice over the past few years could be an early warning of more significant changes to come."

Global average surface temperatures during the mid-Pliocene were about 3°C (5.5°F) greater than today and within the range projected for the 21st century by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Scientists studied conditions during the mid-Pliocene by analyzing fossils dated back to this time period. The USGS led this research through the Pliocene Research, Interpretation and Synoptic Mapping group. The primary collaborators in PRISM are Columbia University, Brown University, University of Leeds, University of Bristol, the British Geological Survey and the British Antarctic Survey. ***(USGS)***

SCIENCE PICKS

An eruption of volcano monitoring improvements

Volcanoes can be catastrophic. Lava flows and debris avalanches can choke major riverways, destroy bridges and devastate natural areas. Scientists from the USGS work with partners around the world to actively monitor the world's volcanoes. They use seismometers to detect and monitor very small earthquakes that indicate that magma is rising. They also use GPS to detect changes in the size of the volcano. The USGS has allocated over $7 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds to 15 universities and state agencies nationwide to modernize the equipment in volcano monitoring networks and produce high-resolution maps of high-threat volcanoes. ***(USGS)***

The king of the North Pole: Brutus the wolf

Thanks to a GPS/satellite collar worn by a wolf named Brutus, scientists can finally find out what arctic wolves do during the winter. For a long time, scientists could only study these wolves during a few months out of the year, because the winter is too harsh for scientists to stay. There is 24 hours of darkness, and temperatures can fall to negative 70 degrees Fahrenheit. The GPS/satellite collar makes it possible for Brutus to email information about his pack right to the offices of USGS scientists. You can follow Brutus and his pack too! Will the wolves travel all the way to the North Pole? What will they eat? How far will they have to travel to find food? To hear more about Brutus, check out USGS CoreCast Episode 111. ***(USGS)***

The oldest business in North America

The Miwok Tribe conducted perhaps the oldest business in North America. Long before textiles were produced en masse or Andrew Carnegie perfected steel manufacturing, this ancient group of Native Americans was manufacturing and trading salt. New research from the USGS reveals that hundreds of man-made basins three to four feet in diameter were carved into solid granite and cover an area the size of a football field in the Sierra Nevada. These basins were filled with water from a nearby salt spring. When the water evaporated in the hot summer months, a salt residue that could be harvested was left at the bottom. They could manufacture three tons of salt each season, giving them more than enough for use within their own community and a surplus for trade. ***(USGS)***

Unmanned Aircraft Flying

Unmanned Aircraft Systems technology can go where no scientist has ever gone before. Using these remote controlled planes, USGS scientists will be able to research the most remote and dangerous areas, such as polar regions, volcanic islands and expansive deserts. Manned aircraft flights are rarely possible in these areas due to long flight times and hazardous weather conditions. The USGS has long been known as an authoritative source of aerial photography and satellite-based imagery. This technology, developed by the U.S. Army, will allow the USGS to understand landscape change and conduct wildlife inventories with a level of detail and precision never before attainable. ***(USGS)***

Climate change: Nitrogen adds to the equation

Nitrogen from human activities is a significant source of greenhouse gases. Eleven percent of human-caused greenhouse gases comes from nitrous oxide. It also has significant negative effects on ecosystems, particularly protected national parks and wilderness areas. Nitrogen impacts were discussed on the world stage at the UN Climate Change Convention in Copenhagen this month. This U.S. State Department-sanctioned event highlighted nitrogen's role in climate processes and presented nitrogen management strategies to help mitigate climate change and minimize ecological impacts. ***(USGS)***

Red alert! Valuable mineral found in Alaska

The chemical that produces red color in television monitors and LED used for energy-efficient light bulbs has been discovered in the Taylor Mountains quadrangle of Alaska. Europium has been found by USGS scientists in dark, pellet-like grains of the mineral monazite along with other metals of commercial interest such as gold, collected from Taylor Mountain area streams. Currently, the U.S. europium supply is scarce and limited to ore found in California and imported from China. ***(USGS)***

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

Invitation for Bid
PSS IFB 09-040

"Video and Related Equipment for Marianas High School (MHS)"

The Public School System and the State Board of Education are soliciting competitive sealed bids for the purchase of **Video and Related Equipment for Marianas High School.** The Scope of Work is available beginning December 31, 2009 at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the CNMI Retirement Fund building, Capital Hill, Saipan MP 96950

Bids must be placed in a sealed envelope marked **"IFB 09-040"** containing one (1) original with Three (3) copies and submitted to the PSS Procurement & Supply Office situated on the 3rd Floor of the CNMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **January 20, 2010 at 10:00 a.m.,** at which time bids, will be publicly opened. Any bids received after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted.

Questions shall be in writing addressed to Robert Florian, Procurement & Supply Officer or Emailed to the following address: **robert.florian@pss.cnmi.mp**

/S/ Rita A. Sablan, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education

/S/ Robert Florian
Procurement Officer

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

Invitation for Bid
PSS IFB 09-041

JANITORIAL SERVICES FOR MHS GYMNASIUM

The Public School System and the State Board of Education are soliciting Competitive Sealed Bids for **One Year (Annual) of Janitorial Services for the Marinas High School Gymnasium.**

The Scope of Work is available at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the CNMI Retirement Fund Building, Capital Hill, Saipan MP 96950. Faxed requests maybe sent to 664-3791. This is a re-announcement of IFB 09-034.

Bids should be placed in a sealed envelope marked **"IFB 09-041"** containing one (1) original with three (3) copies and submitted to the PSS Procurement & Supply Office no later than **January 14, 2010, at 10:00 a.m.,** at which time, bids will be publicly opened. Any bids received after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstances.

Questions should be in writing and addressed to Robert Florian, Procurement & Supply Officer or E-mailed to the following address: **robert.florian@pss.cnmi.mp**

/S/ Rita A. Sablan, Ed.D.
Commissioner of Education

/S/ Robert Florian
Procurement Officer

Life & Style

Journalists' group slams NBC for flying boy home

NEW YORK (AP)—The Society of Professional Journalists condemned NBC News for practicing "checkbook journalism" by chartering a jet that carried a New Jersey man involved in a bitter custody battle and his son home from Brazil.

David Goldman, who successfully fought the Brazilian family of his now-deceased ex-wife for custody of 9-year-old Sean, granted an interview to Meredith Vieira of NBC's "Today" show that aired Monday.

NBC said Goldman was booked for "Today" before the network invited him on the plane. The network had already arranged for the plane to bring its own employees home for Christmas, NBC News spokeswoman Lauren Kapp said. If NBC hadn't brought the Goldmans' home, one of its rivals would have, she said.

"We've covered this story exceptionally well," she said. "Their going on the plane did not affect our coverage of the story or getting them booked at all."

NBC News told viewers that it had paid for the Goldmans' trip home, she said. The network showed pictures of the Goldmans on the plane and on "Nightly News" featured a brief interview by correspondent Jeff Rossen with David Goldman while both were on the plane.

The journalists' group said NBC News jeopardized its integrity with the arrangement.

"Paying for access taints the credibility and neutrality of what you are doing," said Andy Schotz, chairman of the SPJ ethics committee. "There is now a motive for people to be helping you, to be telling you what you want to hear."

Most news organizations say they don't pay for interviews. But critics say the commonly used practice of paying to license photos or video from a subject matter or paying for someone's travel is a way of getting around the restriction.

At the same time SPJ criticized NBC News for its conduct with the Goldmans, CNN and ABC paid for cell phone pictures taken by Jasper Schuringa, the man who helped subdue an alleged terrorist who tried to take down a Detroit-bound plane. Both also interviewed Schuringa but denied any connection between the payments and interview.

Kapp said she believed NBC News did nothing wrong by chartering the plane.

The Goldmans "were invited on as guests," she said. "This was not a booking strategy."

Goldman's lawyer, Patricia Apy, said Tuesday that Goldman never had a contract with NBC. She said the Goldman camp was loyal to the network because it did a thorough report on his situation a year ago before the story became major news.

AP

U.S. David Goldman, top, followed by his 9-year-old son Sean, gestures as he boards a plane at the Galeao airport, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Thursday, Dec. 24, 2009.

Letterman extortion suspect looks to Woods scandal

NEW YORK (AP)—The TV producer accused of shaking down David Letterman to keep mum about his affairs is drawing on the Tiger Woods sex scandal to try to bolster his defense.

In court papers filed Tuesday, Robert "Joe" Halderman's lawyer cited published reports that Woods paid an alleged mistress millions of dollars to stay silent. Attorney Gerald Shargel suggested that since the woman hasn't been charged with a crime, Halderman shouldn't be, either.

"Evidence of celebrity misdeeds has a significant fair market value," lawyer Gerald Shargel wrote. "... Evidence of such misdeeds is routinely suppressed through private business arrangement."

Halderman has pleaded not guilty to attempted grand larceny in a case that shoved Letterman's love life into public view. The "Late Show" host stunned viewers in October by abruptly revealing the extortion case and acknowledging he had had affairs with women on his staff.

AP

In this Oct. 2, 2009 file photo, Robert J. Halderman appears in State Supreme Court in New York, for an arraignment on an attempted grand larceny charge for allegedly attempting to blackmail talk show host David Letterman.

Authorities say Halderman demanded $2 million as hush money, threatening to reveal information he'd gleaned from reading in his then-girlfriend's diary that she had had trysts with Letterman, her boss. Halderman's threat was couched as an outline of a thinly veiled screenplay about the comic's life unraveling with the disclosure of his dalliances, prosecutors say.

Shargel says Halderman just offered to sell his "very marketable story" to Letterman—and to keep it confidential as part of the deal.

Prosecutors declined to comment on Halderman's attempt to draw a parallel to the scandal surrounding Woods. The golfer has acknowledged infidelities, without giving specifics, and has not said he paid anyone to keep quiet.

But Letterman's lawyer weighed in, calling the producer's latest argument a bid to shift attention from his own conduct.

"This was not a sale of anything legitimate, this was classic extortion," Letterman lawyer Daniel J. Horwitz said in a statement.

Halderman, 52, is a producer for CBS' "48 Hours Mystery." If convicted, he could face up to 15 years in prison.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Office of the Secretary of Public Works
2nd Floor Joeten Commercial Building, Gualo Rai
Saipan, MP 96950

INVITATION FOR BIDS
DPW10-IFB-002

CONSTRUCTION OF ENCLOSURE HOUSING FOR THE EMERGENCY GENERATORS FOR THE W.I.C. ADMINISTRATION AND CLINIC BUILDINGS LOCATED ON NAVY HILL, SAIPAN

Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Eloy S. Inos, through the Department of Public Works (DPW) are soliciting sealed bids for the Construction of Enclosure Housing for the Emergency Generators for the W.I.C. Administration and Clinic Buildings Located on Navy Hill, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

The project package will be available on or after Dec. 31, 2009 at DPW Technical Services Division, #1353 Mednilla Avenue, Capital Hill, Saipan. A non-refundable payment to One Hundred Dollars **(US$100.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at the DPW Technical Services Division. All interested bidders are also required to include Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC) in their bid packages in order to bid oil this project. The ICC can be obtained at the Department of Commerce/Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) on Capitol Hill.

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, dated May 24, 2001. Bidding procuredures shall be in compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations. Preference is available to US Citizens or Permanent Residents as per Public Law 15-95 and as further Amended by Public Law 15-118 and must be submitted with the BID or PROPOSAL if preference is claimed.

There will be a Pre-bid Conference for this project on Jan. 20, 2010, 1:00 p.m. local time at the project site located in W.I.C. Administration Building, Navy Hill Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All questions regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on Jan. 25, 2010 to **Mr. Joseph M. Inos Jr., Director of Technical Services Division**, #1353 Mednilla Avenue, Capital Hill Saipan or facsimile to (670) 234-3547.

Sealed bids must be marked "**DPW10-IFB-002**". For bidders within the CNMI, all original and two copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, no later than 1:00 p.m. local time Jan. 29, 2010. Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional Seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to bid. Notices of Intent to bid must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than 1:00 p.m. local time Jan. 29, 2010, and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com. For bidders located outside the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than Jan. 29, 2010, and must be received no later than Feb. 09, 2010. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, at 1:00 p.m. local time, Feb. 12, 2010. However, if no notices of intent to bid were received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be opened at 1:00 p.m. local time, on Feb. 03, 2010.

For bids greater than Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars **($25,000.00)** a bid security of fifteen (15%) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. A Surety company shall hold the certificate of authority (COA) from the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. This security may be Certified Check, Cashier's or Bid Bond. Checks must be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer, with the name of the bidder and a notation on the face of the check: "Credit Account No. 44660". If a bid bond is submitted it must be accompanied by an Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC).

The bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNN41 Procurement Regulations Section 3-301. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with the CNMI Government and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price for contracts greater than $25,000.00, The surety company providing the Performance and payment bonds must authorized to conduct business in CNMI and possess unencumbered assets equal to the penal amount of each bond.

Performance time for completion of this project is Ninety **(90)** calendar days upon issuance of Notice to Proceed. Liquidated damages will be assessed at one hundred dollars **(US$100.00)** per working days for delays beyond the established completion date.

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government, The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not effect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

/s/ DIEGO B. SONGSONG
Secretary of Public Works

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director of Procurement & Supply

/s/ JOSEPH KEVIN P. VILLAGOMEZ
Secretary of Public Health

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Office of the Secretary of Public Works
2nd Floor Joeten Commercial Building, Gualo Rai
Saipan, MP 96950

INVITATION FOR BIDS
DPW10-IFB-003

SUPPLY, DELIVERY AND INSTALLATION FOR THE EMERGENCY GENERATORS FOR THE W.I.C. ADMINISTRATION AND CLINIC BUILDINGS LOCATED ON NAVY HILL, SAIPAN

Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Eloy S. Inos, through the Department of Public Works (DPW) are soliciting sealed bids for the Supply, Delivery and Installation for the Emergency Generators for the W.I.C. Administration and Clinic Buildings Located on Navy Hill, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

The project package will be available on or after Dec. 31, 2009 at DPW Technical Services Division, #1353 Mednilla Avenue, Capital Hill, Saipan. A non-refundable payment to One Hundred Dollars **(US$100.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at the DPW Technical Services Division. All interested bidders are also required to include Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC) in their bid packages in order to bid on this project. The ICC can be obtained at the Department of Commerce/Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) on Capitol Hill.

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, dated May 24, 2001. Bidding procuredures shall be in compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations. Preference is available to US Citizens or Permanent Residents as per Public Law 15-95 and as further Amended by Public law 15-118 and must be submitted with the BID or PROPOSAL if preference is claimed.

There will be a Pre-bid Conference for this project on Jan. 20, 2010, 10:00 a.m. local time at the project site located in W.I.C. Administration Building, Navy Hill Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All questions regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on Jan. 25, 2010 to **Mr. Joseph M. Inos Jr., Director of Technical Services Division**, #1353 Mednilla Avenue, Capital Hill Saipan or facsimile to (670) 234-3547.

Sealed bids must be marked "**DPWIO-IFB-003**". For bidders within the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, no later than 1:00 p.m. local time Jan. 29, 2010. Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional Seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to bid. Notices of Intent to bid must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than 1:00 p.m. local time Jan. 29 2010 and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com. For bidders located outside the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than Jan. 29, 2010, and must be received no later than Feb. 09, 2010. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, at 1:00 p.m. local time, Feb. 12, 2010. However, if no notices of intent to bid were received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be opened at 1:00 p.m. local time, on Feb. 03, 2010.

For bids greater than Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars **($25,000.00)** a bid security of fifteen (15%) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. A Surety company shall hold the certificate of authority (COA) from the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. This security may be Certified Check, Cashier's or Bid Bond. Checks must be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer, with the name of the bidder and a notation on the face of the check: "Credit Account No. 44660". If a bid bond is submitted it must be accompanied by an Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC).

The bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations Section 3-301. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with the CNMI Government and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price for contracts greater than $25,000.00. The surety company providing the Performance and payment bonds must authorized to conduct business in CNMI and possess unencumbered assets equal to the penal amount of each bond.

Performance time for completion of this project is One Hundred Twenty **(120)** calendar days upon issuance of Notice to Proceed. Liquidated damages will be assessed at one hundred dollars **(US$100.00)** per working days for delays beyond the established completion date.

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not effect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

/s/ DIEGO B. SONGSONG
Secretary of Public Works

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director of Procurement & Supply

/s/ JOSEPH KEVIN P. VILLAGOMEZ
Secretary of Public Health

Nick Jonas takes carefully measured musical step with the Administration

Nick Jonas speaks with the clipped urgency of someone perpetually out of time.

Understandably so—the 17-year-old singer-songwriter has, along with his brothers Kevin and Joe, accomplished more in the past three years than some musicians manage in a lifetime: Three studio albums, each a worldwide multiplatinum juggernaut; four world tours that have grossed millions of dollars; and a fistful of films and TV shows.

If all of that were not enough, the Dallas native is adding one more line to his résumé — solo act.

On Saturday, with his new band, the Administration, at his back, Nick Jonas will kick off a month-long promo tour for his new solo album, "Who I Am," with a two-night stand at Dallas' House of Blues.

Recorded hastily, with minimal overdubs, over eight days at Nashville's Blackbird Studios with Jonas Brothers producer John Fields, "Who I Am" is culled from three years' worth of unused songs. The label declined to make available an advance copy of the full record, slated for release Feb. 2; the lead single, and title track, is instantly familiar to anyone who has heard a Jonas Brothers tune in heavy rotation these past few years, albeit a brand of pop more inclined toward shaking hips than making tweens scream. ***(McClatchy-Tribune News Service)***

Tim Allen goes 'Crazy' directing 1st feature film

BIRMINGHAM, Mich. (AP)—Tim Allen is one of America's favorite comics.

He's the guy who parlayed years of standup into the top-rated "Home Improvement" sitcom and "The Santa Clause" and "Galaxy Quest" films.

So why does the 56-year-old funnyman turn all serious when asked about his latest project? Maybe it has something to do with his level of involvement.

Allen makes his directorial debut in the comedy "Crazy on the Outside," which opens Jan. 8. He also stars in the movie.

"I've got a lot on the line here. I financed this thing—private financing," Allen said. "I used Kevin Costner's model. He helped me through this—on how to direct it, how to put it out."

Besides Costner, Allen also consulted with director Barry Sonnenfeld and read books on directing written by Francis Ford Coppola, an Allen favorite.

Not only did he seek out advice from industry pals about working behind the camera, Allen also persuaded friends to get in front of it.

Sigourney Weaver, who worked alongside Allen on "Galaxy Quest," and Allen's "Wild Hogs" co-star Ray Liotta have prominent roles in "Crazy," which also features Kelsey Grammer and Julie Bowen.

Liotta said the "Crazy" set was "loose and fun."

"He surrounded himself with great people," Liotta said. "If he called me again, I would definitely do it."

The movie opens with Allen's character being released from prison and follows him as he deals with life post-incarceration. Weaver plays his sister, Liotta his former partner in crime, Bowen his ex-flame and Grammer her fiance.

Allen is pleased with the finished product, calling it "a great romance" and "a very high-end comedy."

"I really worked hard to make it special," he said.

Allen also worked hard to promote it.

He traveled to eight cities over 10 days earlier this month, doing his standup act before screening "Crazy on the Outside."

It was a unique twofer. After all, how many directors do standup?

The last stop on the tour was at a movie theater in the Detroit suburb of Birmingham, not far from Allen's boyhood home.

There, he had the audience—including family members—in stitches, riffing on everything from President Barack Obama and Congress to bodily functions and superheroes.

AP

In this Dec. 10, 2009 file photo, actor/comedian Tim Allen is interviewed at the Palladium 12 Theatre in Birmingham, Mich.

The idea was to generate buzz by showing the film ahead of its release to comedy fans in select cities, but Allen found his plan may have backfired a bit.

"I'm almost hurting my movie," he said in an interview ahead of the Birmingham event. "In Minneapolis, I was so funny. I tried to explain to them, `The movie's funny, but it ain't this funny.' Light comedy is a different laugh."

"The movie's a movie," he said. "It doesn't start out with a pie in the face."

2010 is shaping up to be a big year for Allen.

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Sherlock Holmes

Friday & Saturday 1:05 4:05 7:05 9:55
Sun through Thurs 1:05 4:05 7:05

Robert Downey, Jr., Jude Law
Action, Mystery • Rated PG 13

Synopsis

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's famous super-sleuth, Sherlock Holmes, gets an update with this adaptation of Lionel Wigram's comic book series by writer/director Guy Ritchie (RocknRolla) starring Robert Downey Jr. as the titular detective, with Jude Law stepping into the shoes of his sidekick, Dr. Watson. Heading up the rest of the cast are RocknRolla's Mark Strong as the film's villain, Blackwood, and Rachel McAdams portraying the love interest, Irene Adler.

It's Complicated

Friday & Saturday 1:30 4:20 7:10 9:40
Sun through Thurs 1:30 4:20 7:10

Meryl Streep, Alec Baldwin
Comedy • Rated R

Synopsis

Veteran writer/director Nancy Meyers (Something's Gotta Give, What Women Want) returns to familiar romantic comedy territory with this untitled production for Universal Pictures starring Meryl Streep as a woman who finds herself caught in the middle of dual romantic advances from two suitors (played by Steve Martin and Alec Baldwin).

Alvin & The Chipmunks: The Sqeakquel

Friday & Saturday 1:15 4:15 7:25 9:30
Sun through Thurs 1:15 4:15 7:25

Justin Long, Matthew Gray Gubler
Children, Family • Rated PG

Synopsis

The lovable singing-and-dancing trio of famous marmots continues their big-screen hijinks with this follow-up to the 20th Century Fox smash-hit live-action/CG family comedy, this time incorporating a female version of the group entitled the Chipettes. Dr. Dolittle's Betty Thomas helms with Justin Long, Matthew Gray Gubler, and Jesse McCartney returning as the voices of Alvin, Simon, and Theodore.

★ ★ ★

Avatar

Friday & Saturday 12:15 3:30 6:45 10:00
Sun through Thurs 12:15 3:30 6:45

Sam Worthington, Zoe Saldana
Science Fiction • Rated PG 13

Did You Hear About The Morgans?

Friday & Saturday 1:20 4:10 7:30 9:50
Sun through Thurs 1:20 4:10 7:30

Hugh Grant, Sarah Jessica Parker
Comedy • Rated PG 13

The Princess And The Frog

Friday & Saturday 1:10 4:30 7:20 9:35
Sun through Thurs 1:10 4:30 7:20

Anika Noni Rose, John Goodman
Comedy, Family • Rated G

Twilight Saga: New Moon

Friday & Saturday 1:00 4:00 7:00 9:45
Sun through Thurs 1:00 4:00 7:00

Robert Pattinson, Kristen Stewart
Thriller, Romance • Rated PG 13

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The best of the decade in film starts with 'Nemo'

By ANN HORNADAY
(C) 2009, THE WASHINGTON POST

I'm arguing with myself already. "What, 'Y Tu Mamá Tambien' and no 'Children of Men'? 'The Lives of Others' and no 'Diving Bell and the Butterfly'? "And really, Ann? 'Finding Nemo'?!"

Actually, on that last one, I stand firm. I fly the little clownfish flag proudly, on the grounds that one of the organizing principles of Top 10 lists is not only tolerating but wanting to watch something over and over and over again. "Finding Nemo" fits that description, which I discovered firsthand five years ago, when we brought our then 3-year-old daughter home. It wasn't long before "Finding Nemo" was on heavy rotation in the DVD player. And I never tired of the movie, from its gorgeous visuals and fabulous voice work by Albert Brooks and Ellen DeGeneres, to its message of loving by letting go.

But "Finding Nemo" also deserves the decade's No. 1 slot because it so aptly symbolizes how important animated family features have become in the movie business—along with toy and book franchises, they're the last of the reliables in prying people off their couches—and the leaps they've taken aesthetically. This was a decade, after all, that included such masterworks as "Spirited Away," "Howl's Moving Castle," "WALL-E" and, this year alone, "Up," "Ponyo," "Fantastic Mr. Fox" and "The Princess and the Frog." All are movies I could happily watch over and over again. But the one I reach for first will always be the little clown fish.

"Finding Nemo" deserves the decade's No. 1 slot because it so aptly symbolizes how important animated family features have become in the movie business.

The best

1. **"Finding Nemo"** (2003)
2. **"You Can Count on Me"** (2000)
3. **"The Lives of Others"** (2006)
4. **"The Hurt Locker"** (2009)
5. **"Y Tu Mamá Tambien"** (2001)
6. **"Pan's Labyrinth"** (2006)
7. **"The Edge of Heaven"** (2007)
8. **"A Mighty Wind"** (2003)
9. **"Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind"** (2004)
10. **"There Will Be Blood"** (2007)

The worst

"Star Wars: Clone Wars" (2008)

If "Finding Nemo" represents the best of the animation decade, this misfire represents the very worst, punctuating a decline in the "Star Wars" franchise that began in 1999 with "The Phantom Menace" and continued its downward spiral through "Attack of the Clones" and "Revenge of the Sith." Sad.

TOP 10 ON ITUNES

iTunes' top 10 selling singles and albums of the week ending Dec. 28, 2009:

Singles:

1. "**Tik Tok**," Ke$ha
2. "**Replay**," Iyaz
3. "Fireflies," Owl City
4. "**Bad Romance**," Lady GaGa
5. "**Empire State of Mind (feat. Alicia Keys)**," Jay-Z
6. "**Down (feat. Lil Wayne)**," Jay Sean
7. "**Whatcha Say**," Jason Derulo
8. "**Party In the U.S.A.**," Miley Cyrus
9. "**Do You Remember (feat. Sean Paul & Lil Jon)**," Jay Sean
10. "**Meet Me Halfway**," Black Eyed Peas

Albums:

1. "**Ocean Eyes**," Owl City
2. "**The Fame Monster (standard)**," Lady GaGa
3. "**We Are Young Money**," Young Money
4. "**Stronger with Each Tear**," Mary J. Blige
5. "**Relapse**," Eminem
6. "**Glee - The Music, Vol. 2**," Glee Cast
7. "**My World**," Justin Bieber
8. "**The Element of Freedom**," Alicia Keys
9. "**Fearless**," Taylor Swift
10. "**Alvin and The Chipmunks: The Squeakquel** (Original Motion Picture Soundtrack), Various Artists

Autopsy for Avenged Sevenfold drummer inconclusive

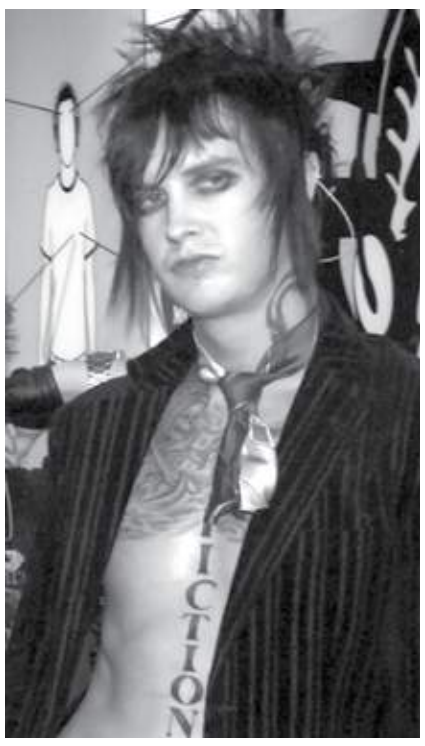
HUNTINGTON BEACH, Calif. (AP)—An autopsy is inconclusive as to the cause of death for Avenged Sevenfold drummer Jimmy "The Rev" Sullivan.

Orange County sheriff's spokesman Jim Amormino said Tuesday that the coroner's office ordered toxicology, microscopic and laboratory tests to help determine why Sullivan died. It's expected to take several weeks to get the results of the tests.

Sullivan was found dead in his Huntington Beach home on Monday.

Avenged Sevenfold formed in Huntington Beach in 1999 and won Best New Artist at the MTV Video Music Awards in 2006. According to their MySpace page, the five-man metalcore band was working on their fifth album.

In a statement, the band called Sullivan "one of the world's best drummers," and "our best friend and brother."



AP

This Jan. 17, 2006 photo shows 'Avenged Sevenfold' drummer Jimmy "The Rev" Sullivan backstage stage during MTV's "Total Request Live" in New York.

Protest at Mexican jail where Mel Gibson to film

VERACRUZ, Mexico (AP)—About 300 relatives of inmates at a Mexican prison where Mel Gibson is reportedly scheduled to make a movie protested outside the facility Tuesday, fearing their loved ones will be moved to make way for the production.

The group of protesters said it would be harder to visit inmates or bring them food if they are transferred out of the Gulf coast city of Veracruz.

One protester held a sign that read "No transfers to make a movie."

Gerardo Duran, the director of the Ignacio Allende prison, says the reports of transfers were unfounded rumors. But he acknowledged that part of the facility will be cleared to allow the filmmakers to work.

Earlier this month, Veracruz Gov. Fidel Herrera said part of the prison would be emptied in January "because a grand production will be filmed there with our friend, the actor and producer Mel Gibson."

A publicist for Gibson could not be reached.

Gibson filmed his 2006 Mayan-language movie "Apocalypto" in Veracruz.

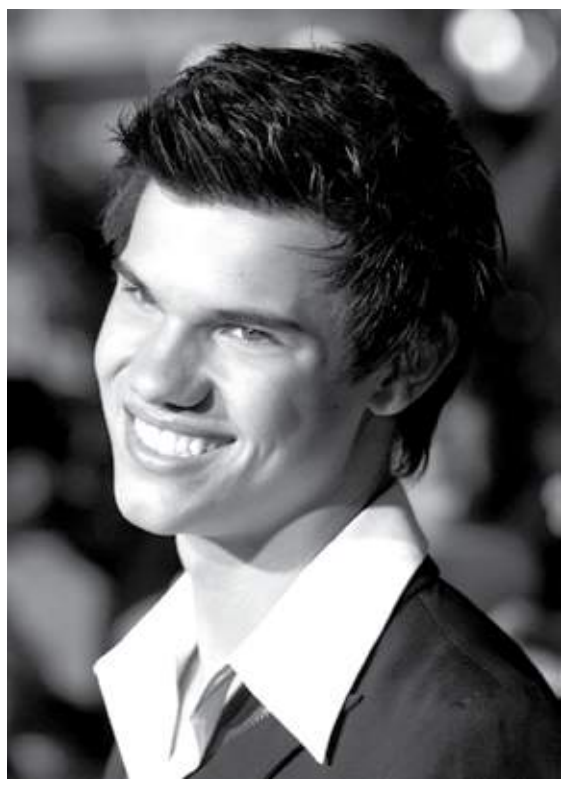
Jackman, Lautner headed to People's Choice Awards

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Hugh Jackman, Taylor Lautner, Mariah Carey and Sandra Bullock are among the stars expected at next week's People's Choice Awards.

Steve Carell, Carrie Underwood, Ellen DeGeneres and LL Cool J are also set to attend the celebrity-filled ceremony on Jan. 6 at the Nokia Theatre in Los Angeles. The show will be broadcast live on CBS.

Executive producer Mark Burnett says the stars "are coming out in droves to thank the fans for their love and support."

Queen Latifah will host the show in which fans vote for their favorite actors, musicians, movies and TV programs.



In this Nov. 17, 2008 file photo, Taylor Lautner arrives at the premiere of "Twilight" in Los Angeles.

AP

ENTERTAINMENT TIDBITS

Police recover Picasso's 'Little Guitar'

ROME (AP)—Police say they have recovered from a Roman businessman Picasso's "Little Guitar" toy sculpture made for the artist's daughter Paloma. Carabinieri police say Picasso had given the toy to his friend, Italian artist Giuseppe Vittorio Parisi. Parisi lent it to the businessman two years ago to build a glass showcase for it to be exhibited at the civic museum on Lake Maggiore. But police say the unnamed businessman never returned the work, keeping it in a shoe box in his home in Pomezia. Parisi died in January. His widow alerted police that the "Little Guitar" was still in the hands of the businessman. Carabinieri Capt. Gabriele De Pascalis says the businessman is free on charges of fraud. The guitar is heading to the museum as planned.

Court disciplines Joe Jackson's attorney

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Records show an attorney handling Joe Jackson's bid to receive a monthly stipend from his son Michael's estate has had his law license placed on probation for two years. Last week's decision by the California Supreme Court isn't related to Brian Oxman's work on the Jackson case. But the attorney will face scrutiny while he argues the Jackson family patriarch should receive more than $15,000 a month. The discipline is for failing to drop a 2002 federal lawsuit and ignoring an order to pay sanctions imposed against him. Oxman signed an agreement stating his actions caused the defendants in that case "significant harm" and wasted judicial resources. His law license could be suspended if regulators find he errs on the Jackson or other cases. Oxman declined comment on the matter. It is the second time the state has disciplined him in 33 years of practice. A hearing on Joe Jackson's petition is scheduled for next month.

Comedy Central not renewing 'The Jeff Dunham Show'

NEW YORK (AP)—Comedy Central won't be renewing "The Jeff Dunham Show" for a second season. The show, featuring comedian Jeff Dunham and his repertoire of puppets, attracted plenty of attention, both positive and negative. Its debut drew 5.3 million viewers, a season premiere record for Comedy Central. But most of the reviews were terrible, and ratings dwindled during the season. Comedy Central spokesman Steve Albani says the network will continue "to be in business with Jeff in a big way," including a live tour, standup special, DVDs and consumer-products partnership. Comedy Central signed a multi-platform deal with Dunham in March.

'Jersey Shore' town downplays linkage with show

SEASIDE HEIGHTS, N.J. (AP)—The New Jersey beach town that's home to MTV's "Jersey Shore" is trying to distance itself from the controversy surrounding the reality show. In a statement Monday, the Borough of Seaside Heights says it "did not solicit, promote or participate in the filming" of the show. It did issue a permit allowing the production company to film, but says those permits are issued routinely. The show focuses on the escapades of eight 20-somethings thrown together at a summer shore house. The stars are mostly Italian-Americans. Italian-American civic groups and New Jersey lawmakers are outraged, claiming the show perpetuates negative stereotypes. The town insists the show doesn't reflect the majority of its visitors.

History of betrayal undermines woman's current relationship

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: I'm 41 and a single mom. My first marriage lasted 19 years, during which my husband cheated on me three times that I know of. I have dated a few men since the divorce. I caught each of them lying to me, cheating on me—or both.

I am now seeing a man who seems to be an honest family man. However, I can't bring myself to trust him. We have been seeing each other for a year, and I care about him deeply. But I do not trust him, and the truth is I don't trust anyone—not even my own mother.

I'm not sure I know how to trust, Abby, and I am destroying my relationship with this man because of it. He has evening meetings and occasionally needs to travel on business, and I am making us both miserable. I do feel he's an honest, God-fearing family man, but when it comes to our relationship, I'm unable to trust. Please tell me what to do.

DESPERATE IN ARIZONA

DEAR DESPERATE: Your reasons for not trusting men seemed understandable when I read that your husband had cheated multiple times, and that you had the same rotten luck with men after your divorce. Then I got to the line about your mother. If you don't trust her, then how far back do your trust issues go? And is it possible that you have turned your insecurity into a self-fulfilling prophecy?

If you want to salvage this relationship, recognize that you have a problem that won't go away without counseling to help you understand where your trust problems originated. Wouldn't it be interesting if they had less to do with the men in your life than with your mother? You'll never know until you look further —so before you chase this man away, explain that you realize you have been unfair to him and ask him to give you patience and some time to fix the problem. He must care for you very much to have stuck it out this long.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: When I was 18, I met a girl, "Ava," who was 17. We became good friends but we lived an hour apart and only dated for four months. Ava called it off because she said she was in school and wanted to date other guys. I found out that the next year she got married.

Six years later, Ava called out of the blue and invited me to dinner. She was divorced, but I was in a relationship at the time, so I never called her back. I got married the following year and have been married for 31 years.

A couple of months ago I found out Ava's married name and phone number and called her. I apologized for not having returned her call way back when, and we talked about her family and mine. Abby, I care for her and would like to be friends. I'd like to keep in touch, but I don't want to invade her life or cause problems. Any advice would be appreciated.

REMEMBERING IN RICHMOND

DEAR REMEMBERING: I'm not sure what it is you're looking for, but if you and Ava were meant to be friends, I think it would have happened before this. My advice is to let sleeping dogs lie.

■■■

DEAR READERS: I'm sure all of us are glad to bid a "fond farewell" to 2009. What a year this has been!

If you're planning to celebrate the New Year with alcohol tonight, please appoint a designated driver. And on this night of all nights, everyone—including the designated driver—should remember to drive defensively. To one and all, I wish a happy, healthy 2010.—Love, ABBY

■■■

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

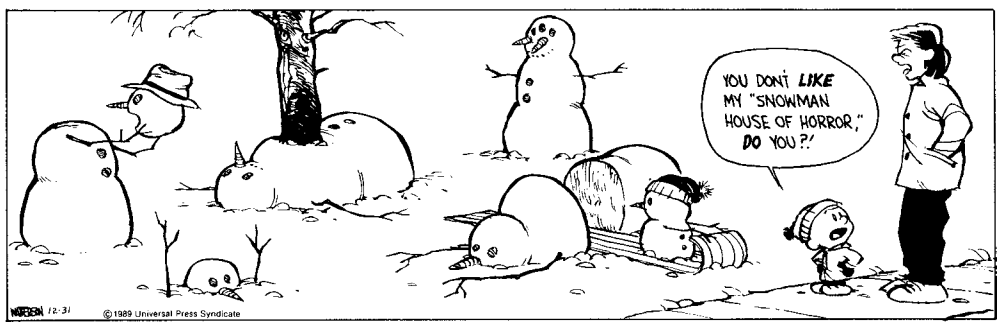
■■■

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby—Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



Garfield®

By Jim Davis

I WONDER IF ANYTHING IS GOING ON
JIM DAVIS 12-31
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LIKE A PARTY I HAVEN'T BEEN INVITED TO
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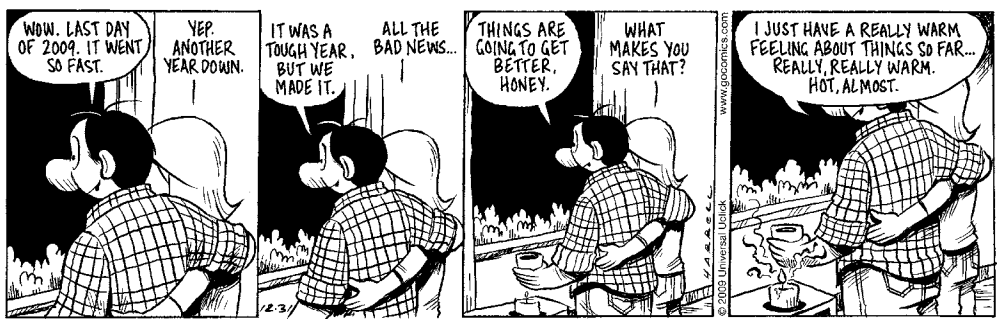
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


WOW. LAST DAY OF 2009. IT WENT SO FAST.
YEP. ANOTHER YEAR DOWN.
IT WAS A TOUGH YEAR, BUT WE MADE IT.
ALL THE BAD NEWS...
THINGS ARE GOING TO GET BETTER, HONEY.
WHAT MAKES YOU SAY THAT?
I JUST HAVE A REALLY WARM FEELING ABOUT THINGS SO FAR... REALLY, REALLY WARM. HOT, ALMOST.
12-31
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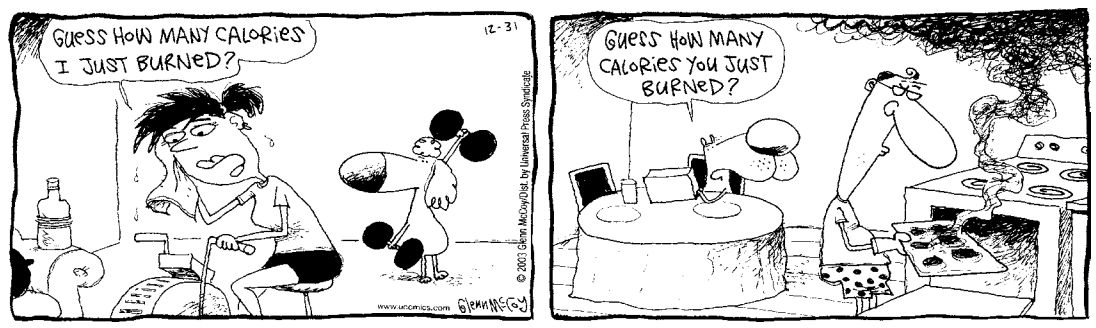
The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


GUESS HOW MANY CALORIES I JUST BURNED?
12-31
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GUESS HOW MANY CALORIES YOU JUST BURNED?

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

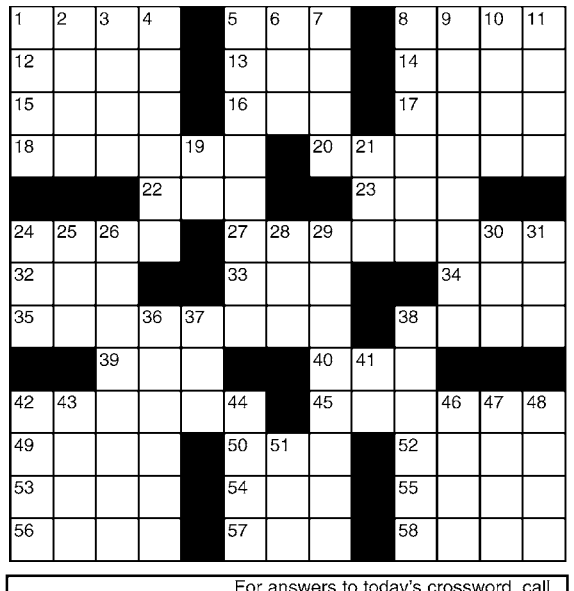
ACROSS
1 Get ready quickly?
5 Weep
8 Skilled
12 Atmosphere
13 Hatchery supply
14 "Family —"
15 Use scissors
16 Symbol of wisdom
17 Banner
18 Cooks clams, maybe
20 Czech capital
22 "Of course"
23 Midafternoon, maybe
24 Castro's land
27 Serbian city
32 Chowed down
33 Eggs
34 Sister
35 Roared
38 Secondhand
39 Despondent
40 Thither
42 Reverberated
45 Reins, bit, etc.
49 Geezer
50 Ostrich's cousin
52 Resign
53 Lariat
54 Fall behind
55 Arm bone
56 Cold War initials
57 "— Impossible"
58 Spuds' buds

DOWN
1 Free ticket
2 Smallest of the litter
3 Canal zone?
4 Tropical fruit
5 Weapon for Robin Hood
6 Tier
7 Kennel sound
8 Catered event
9 Waterloo people
10 Waikiki wingding
11 Lip
19 Yours truly
21 Predetermine the outcome
24 Taxi
25 4x4, for short
26 Hotel staffers
28 First lady
29 Spotted beetles
30 Payable
31 Conclusion
36 Crook during a power outage
37 Have bills
38 Matchless
41 On the other hand
42 Beige
43 Makes dove sounds
44 Sandwich shop
46 As is fitting
47 Queue
48 Greek vowels
51 Wrestling surface

Solution time: 25 mins.

A	G	A	R	■	P	H	D	■	C	R	U	D
L	O	V	E	■	R	O	E	■	H	O	L	E
B	O	O	M	T	O	W	N	■	A	O	N	E
A	P	N	E	A	■	■	T	H	O	M	A	S
■	■	■	D	R	A	B	■	I	S	M	■	■
L	A	Z	Y	■	R	O	O	T	■	A	Y	E
E	G	O	■	L	O	O	M	S	■	T	O	N
D	O	O	■	A	N	N	E	■	F	E	U	D
■	■	M	R	S	■	E	N	G	R	■	■	■
P	O	L	I	T	E	■	■	Y	I	E	L	D
A	L	E	S	■	D	O	O	M	S	D	A	Y
W	I	N	K	■	G	A	D	■	K	I	T	E
N	O	S	Y	■	E	K	E	■	S	E	E	D

Yesterday's answer 12-31



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Joe McIntyre, 37; Val Kilmer, 50; Ben Kingsley, 66; Anthony Hopkins, 72

Happy Birthday: There are things to be done and changes to be made if you want to put the problems of the past behind you. Pick up the pieces and move on to a comfort zone that allows you to flourish. There is plenty to learn and to implement into your future so you don't make the same mistakes twice. Your numbers are 9, 15, 18, 23, 26, 30, 34

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): You don't want to end the year on a negative note. Be willing to back down and let anyone who is overreacting or overindulgent pass by. Jealousy will not pay off, so put on a happy face and the world will smile with you. ✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Getting out with friends or someone you love and admire will lead to a warm and welcome beginning to the new year. You have so much going for you with plenty of opportunities just around the corner. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): You can tie up some important loose ends that will save you at tax time. Listen to the advice you receive regarding health and looking and feeling your best. Practical action will bring positive results. ✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Your resolutions should be filled with wonderful changes, promises and commitments. A chance to share your intentions will lead to valuable suggestions that can help you move with confidence toward your goals. ✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): A little give-and-take, coupled with some creative thoughts will grab attention and lead to plans for the new year. Mix business with pleasure. The hard work that's ahead of you will lead to a better future. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Follow your heart. Socializing with people you find interesting will lead to stimulating conversations that have a practical application. Love is in the stars and romance will lead to a better personal life. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Stay put or get a designated driver if you plan to bring the new year in with a bang. As long as you are smart about the way you do things, you will have no regrets and could even turn out to be everyone's hero. ✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): Get away if you can. Visiting people you don't see that often or setting up a private party for two will all work to your advantage. A change in your direction is apparent and the possibilities appear to be endless. ✪✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Don't drive or travel too far if you don't have to. Something that sounds profitable to you will lead to an interesting meeting and possible partnership. ✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): You are ready to put this year behind you. Any chance you get to initiate change as quickly as possible will help to set the stage for what's to come. You are ready to mix and match some of your old ideas with your current ones. It's time for a new beginning. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Don't rule out any last-minute responsibilities. You have to take care of the people who have taken care of you in the past. The future is in your hands and must be dealt with competently if you don't want to disappoint others as well as yourself. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Don't limit what you can do because you haven't taken care of some challenging personal situations. Once you have done what's required, you will be able to face the world with the knowledge that you are free and clear to pursue your own destiny. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are strong, steadfast and sensitive. You are responsible and reliable and care deeply about the people and causes that interest you.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations,* ***myspace.com/eugenialast*** *for Eugenia's blog,* ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

2								8
		4	2		6	3		
		5		9		1		
	7						3	
		9				6		
	4						9	
		1		5		8		
		8	1		9	4		
9								7

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/31

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

9	1	4	3	5	8	6	7	2
8	3	7	2	1	6	9	4	5
2	6	5	7	9	4	8	1	3
6	7	1	8	3	2	5	9	4
3	9	8	4	6	5	7	2	1
4	5	2	9	7	1	3	6	8
5	2	3	6	4	7	1	8	9
7	4	9	1	8	3	2	5	6
1	8	6	5	2	9	4	3	7

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/30

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

BREAK OUT THE BUBBLY **Solution: 6 letters**

S	E	T	M	P	E	G	A	R	O	T	S	S	N	C
S	T	S	E	E	G	R	A	D	U	A	T	I	O	N
S	U	C	P	K	T	S	R	U	B	R	N	M	I	Y
H	L	O	E	E	C	S	O	E	A	V	M	B	T	O
A	A	A	Y	P	C	U	R	W	I	E	U	R	P	C
K	S	P	E	O	S	I	B	T	M	B	A	W	E	C
E	E	W	P	D	J	E	A	O	B	P	G	I	C	A
Y	D	I	P	Y	R	T	R	L	O	N	R	S	E	S
H	O	N	O	R	I	A	E	U	I	D	A	H	R	I
P	L	E	Y	O	T	S	R	V	R	Z	P	E	U	O
O	P	P	N	I	P	I	R	I	E	S	E	S	S	N
R	X	S	O	E	N	E	N	W	O	H	S	D	S	S
T	E	N	E	G	S	K	R	O	C	I	D	O	E	N
P	A	C	N	W	O	R	C	Ⓝ	Ⓔ	Ⓟ	Ⓞ	O	R	I
C	H	I	L	L	E	D	T	O	A	S	T	G	P	W

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Bubbles, Bucket, Burst, Chilled, Commemoration, Cork, Crown Cap, Deals, Drink, Explode, Good, Graduation, Grapes, Happy, Honor, Invitations, Joyous, Occasions, Open, Party, Pouring, Pressure, Reception, Respects, Saber, Salute, Serving, Shake, Ships, Show, Specialized, Speech, Stem, Storage, Strawberry, Toast, Trophy, Wine, Wins, Wishes

Yesterday's Answer: Cyclotron

SALE: The topics of Wonderword for Kids® appeal to younger fans but the puzzle-difficulty matches what you've come to expect from Wonderword. For a limited time, the book is on sale for just $4 each (U.S. funds only), payable to Universal Uclick. Include $3 postage for the first book order, $1 p&h for each additional book. Send to Wonderword, 1130 Walnut St., Kansas City, Mo. 64106 or call toll-free, 1-800-642-6480.

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Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

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Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

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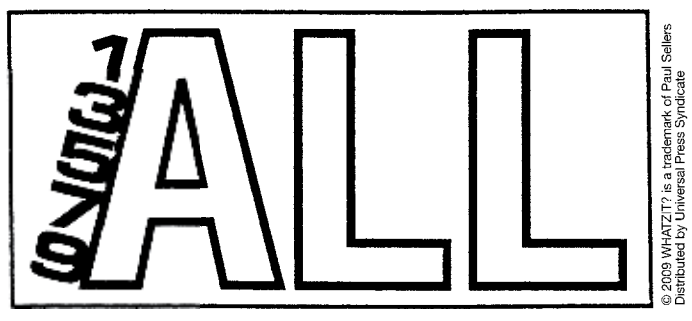

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Find today's solution in this section

Cavaliers clip Hawks again, 95-84

ATLANTA (AP)—The Cleveland Cavaliers held Atlanta scoreless for almost nine minutes to open the fourth quarter to break open a close game and beat the Hawks 95-84 in the NBA on Tuesday.

Mo Williams had 20 points to lead the Cavaliers, who won in their return to Philips Arena since a dominant four-game sweep of the Hawks in the second round of last season's playoffs.

Delonte West had 17 points and Zydrunas Ilgauskas added 15 off Cleveland's bench. LeBron James had 14 points, 10 assists and five steals but made only 6 of 20 shots from the field.

Knicks 104, Pistons 87

At Auburn Hills, Michigan, David Lee had a season-high 30 points and 12 rebounds as New York handed Detroit an eighth straight loss.

Wilson Chandler added 23 points and nine rebounds for the Knicks. Richard Hamilton had 16 points and Rodney Stuckey scored 15 for Detroit despite combining to shoot just 11 of 34.

Thunder 110, Wizards 98

At Washington, Kevin Durant had 35 points and 11 rebounds, Jeff Green added 18 points and Oklahoma City beat Washington for the team's first four-game winning streak in 3Ω years.

It was the fifth straight game that Durant topped the 30-point mark. He has exceeded 30 points nine times in Oklahoma City's 14 December games.

The Thunder, who last won four straight in April 2006 when they were the Seattle SuperSonics, earned their ninth road victory of the season—one more than they had during 2008-09, their first season in Oklahoma City.

Rockets 108, Hornets 100

At Houston, Aaron Brooks scored 27 points, and Luis Scola added 13 points and 12 rebounds as Houston overcame Chris Paul's triple-double and David West's career game in a win over Charlotte.

Paul had 16 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists for his 11th career triple-double and first this season. West had 44 points and 12 rebounds, but the Hornets still slipped to 2-13 on the road this season.

AP

Cleveland Cavaliers guard Mo Williams (2) takes a shot over Atlanta Hawks guard Mike Bibby (10) and Hawks center Zaza Pachulia (27) of Georgia, during the first quarter of an NBA basketball game, Tuesday, Dec. 29, 2009 in Atlanta.

Shane Battier scored 20 points and Carl Landry added 18 off the bench for the Rockets.

Bulls 104, Pacers 95

At Chicago, Derrick Rose scored 28 points as Chicago blew an early 19-point lead before recovering in the second half to beat Indiana.

Chicago's second straight home victory could take some heat off coach Vinny Del Negro, whose job status has been the subject of much speculation after Chicago's disappointing start (now 12-17).

Rose had 18 of his points in the second half. John Salmons added 17 for the Bulls.

Roy Hibbert scored 17 for Indiana, which is without injured star Danny Granger.

Spurs 117, Timberwolves 99

At San Antonio, Richard Jefferson scored 24 points to lead San Antonio to a victory over Minnesota.

Roger Mason Jr. added 18 points, including four 3-pointers, for the Spurs who have won nine of 11 games.

Al Jefferson led Minnesota with 20 points. Kevin Love scored 18 and Johnny Flynn 17 for the Wolves (7-25), who have lost 10 straight to San Antonio.

Lakers 124, Warriors 118

At Los Angeles, Kobe Bryant had a season-high 44 points and 11 assists while making all 16 of his free throws as the Lakers survived Golden State's 55-percent shooting.

Pau Gasol had 27 points and 12 rebounds for the defending NBA champions, who relied even more heavily than usual on Bryant to avoid their third loss in four games over the past five days.

Bryant came through with 17 points in the fourth quarter, clinching his seventh 40-point game of the season on two free throws with 4:04 left. He has 103 40-point games in his career, third-most in NBA history.

Corey Maggette scored 25 points and Monta Ellis added 22 for the Warriors, who beat Phoenix and Boston in the previous three days.

Rockets seeking to trade McGrady

HOUSTON (AP)—The Houston Rockets acknowledge they are trying to trade Tracy McGrady, after the two-time NBA scoring champion's representatives asked the team to deal him.

General manager Daryl Morey said on Tuesday the two sides have had "multiple conversations" and the Rockets "have agreed to look into trade opportunities and have granted him an indefinite leave from team activities."

McGrady was unhappy with his playing time in six games since returning from offseason knee surgery and left the team before two road games over the weekend.

The seven-time All-Star is due to make about $23 million this season in the last year of his contract.

McGrady played a total of 46 minutes in six games this season, his first action since undergoing microfracture surgery on his left knee on Feb. 24.

While McGrady had been insisting since training camp that he was ready to play again, the Rockets were hesitant to return him to the regular rotation.

Houston coach Rick Adelman said on Tuesdays that McGrady never progressed to the point where he was ready to increase his minutes.

"He's been hurt for over a year," Adelman said. "The thing that people want to write about is who he was two years ago, and he isn't that right now. We have a whole team here and it's not just about what he wants or what he was going to want, or what was going to happen. It was about what can he do to help us win, and that was the bottom line to me."

In February, doctors said McGrady would need up to 12 months to fully heal. Adelman said he stuck to that timeline all along, believing McGrady still needed a month or more. He said McGrady wanted to accelerate that timeline, and that led to the impasse over playing time.

The Rockets acquired McGrady in June 2004, hoping that he would team with Yao Ming and return the team to prominence, but his five-season tenure was marked more by injuries than team success.

With McGrady lost in the first round of the playoffs in 2005, 2007 and '08 and the blame for the failures—whether deserved or not—increasingly fell on McGrady, who's winless in seven playoff series.

Petrie signs 3-year contract extension with Kings

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)—Geoff Petrie will get another chance to turn the Sacramento Kings from a struggling franchise into a championship contender.

Petrie signed a three-year contract extension Tuesday to remain the team's president of basketball operations. Petrie's contract was set to expire after this season.

"There's hope for the future," co-owner Gavin Maloof said. "One day I certainly believe there will be multiple championships with this team the way they grow. I don't know if it will be next year or the year after but it will be in the future."

Petrie arrived in Sacramento in 1994 and built a team that won at least 50 games in five straight seasons, contending for the Western Conference title each year. The Kings struggled in recent years and finished with the worst record in the league a year ago.

But Petrie picked Tyreke Evans as part of a stellar draft class last June and hired Paul Westphal as coach. The team is off to a surprising 14-16 start, only three wins shy of last season's total.

"I'm still living a boyhood dream," Petrie said. "I happen to be in a group of people who think the opportunity to work at this level in the NBA is a real honor and a real privilege."

Petrie, who helped build two Western Conference championship teams in Portland, came to Sacramento in 1994. The Kings had made the playoffs only once in the previous nine seasons.

But Petrie began rebuilding the team, acquiring stars Chris Webber, Mike Bibby and Brad Miller in trades, drafting Peja Stojakovic, and signing key free agents Vlade Divac and Bobby Jackson.

The Kings went to the playoffs nine times since Petrie's arrival, making it all the way to the seventh game of the Western Conference finals in 2002 before losing to the Los Angeles.

But the team has dealt with hard times since winning at least 50 games every season from 2000-01 to 2004-05. The Kings won only 17 games last season, the worst mark in franchise history.

"I want to continue to renew this team and get it back to where it can compete again at a championship level," Petrie said. "We're moving in the right direction. I think everybody can see that."

Despite getting only the fourth pick in the draft, Petrie managed to make the picks that have helped fuel the turnaround. Evans is an early favorite for rookie of the year, averaging 20.3 points, 5.1 rebounds and 4.9 assists.

Petrie used the 23rd overall pick on Omri Casspi, the first Israeli to play in the NBA. Casspi's adjustment has been rapid as he is averaging 11.8 points and 4.2 rebounds. Second-round pick Jon Brockman has provided great energy by averaging 4.1 rebounds despite playing only 10.8 minutes per game.

"Last year was a very trying year for all of us," Maloof said. "I think when you looked through the tunnel there wasn't really that much hope. Then when Geoff came up with this blockbuster draft and got Tyreke and Omri Casspi and then you get Brockman as a throw-in. The future is bright. It's a completely different climate, a completely different attitude."

The Kings are also getting good production from second-year player Jason Thompson, averaging 15.3 points and 9.2 rebounds, and third-year player Spencer Hawes. Sacramento recently used a starting lineup with five players age 23 or younger.

Petrie, a two-time All-Star as a player in Portland, was the NBA's Executive of the Year in 1999 and 2001.

The Kings also renewed the contracts and gave promotions to executives Wayne Cooper and Mike Petrie, Geoff's son. Cooper was promoted to vice president of basketball operations and general manager. Mike Petrie was promoted to assistant vice president of basketball operations.

Source: Mets, Bay reach preliminary agreement

NEW YORK (AP)— The Baywatch is set to begin at Citi Field. Free agent slugger Jason Bay and the New York Mets have reached a preliminary agreement, a person familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity because Bay must pass a physical for the deal to be completed. The three-time All-Star is expected to sign a four-year contract for about $65 million.

Bay set career highs with 36 home runs and 119 RBIs last season for Boston. The 31-year-old outfielder is a lifetime .280 hitter and has averaged 30 homers and 99 RBIs in his six full seasons in the majors.

Bay fills a huge hole in left field for the Mets, who skidded to a 70-92 mark during an injury-plagued year. They especially needed a bopper after hitting a major league-low 95 homers in the first season at their spacious, new ballpark.

The deal was first reported by WFAN.

Bay produced in his 1 1/2 seasons with the Red Sox, but the sides couldn't agree on a new deal. The Mets wound up landing a top free agent—a bat they needed for their decimated lineup, and the kind of splashy move their fans demanded general manager Omar Minaya make.

AP

In this Aug. 12, 2009, file photo, Boston Red Sox's Jason Bay celebrates after hitting a two-run home run against the Detroit Tigers in the third inning of a baseball game at Fenway Park in Boston.

Bay and left fielder Matt Holliday were the biggest hitters on the market. Holliday, who split last season in Oakland and St. Louis, is seeking an even richer deal than Bay.

The deal returns Bay to an organization that once had him. A month after Minaya left the Mets' front office in 2002 to become Montreal's general manager, he traded Bay and another minor leaguer to New York for infielder Lou Collier.

Bay spent two months in the Mets' system, playing alongside Jose Reyes, before getting traded to San Diego. The Padres dealt Bay to Pittsburgh in 2003, and the Pirates sent him to Boston in July 2008 in a three-team deal that moved Manny Ramirez to the Dodgers.

Picked by many to be a playoff contender last season, the Mets never got into the race during their first season at Citi Field. Despite the addition of record-setting closer Francisco Rodriguez, New York couldn't overcome injuries to the likes of Carlos Beltran, Carlos Delgado and Reyes. By the end of the year, the Mets were fielding makeshift lineups on a daily basis.

The vast left field at their stadium turned into a revolving door, with eight players starting at least seven games there. Gary Sheffield, Cory Sullivan and Daniel Murphy spent the most time at the spot.

Pressure on the Mets to boost their roster heightened even more this winter when their city rivals, the World Series champion Yankees, traded for All-Star center fielder Curtis Granderson and pitcher Javier Vazquez and signed free agent Nick Johnson.

The Mets recently signed free agent pitcher Kelvim Escobar, who's been beset by injuries, and Japanese reliever Ryota Igarashi and backup catcher Henry Blanco. But finding a major player was their priority and they hope Bay, a star since becoming the 2004 NL Rookie of the Year with Pittsburgh, will put them on the right track.

The Mets still want to sign free agent catcher Bengie Molina and perhaps add another starting pitcher. Aces Roy Halladay and Cliff Lee are among the pitchers who've already been traded during the offseason.

Favre among 8 Vikings in Pro Bowl

NEW YORK (AP)—Brett Favre and Peyton Manning have other plans for visiting Miami in early 2010.

Already Pro Bowl regulars, they were selected to this season's game Tuesday. Favre was among eight Minnesota Vikings who made the NFC team, while Manning was one of six Indianapolis Colts on the AFC squad. It will be Favre's 11th Pro Bowl and the 10th for Manning. No other quarterbacks have been to 10 all-star games.

Naturally, both of them—and every other player chosen for the Pro Bowl whose team has made the playoffs—are thinking of appearing in another game in South Florida, the Super Bowl. All six of the quarterbacks made the playoffs and, of course, would prefer to be playing in the Super Bowl on Feb. 7 in Miami. The Pro Bowl has been moved to the previous Sunday at Dolphin Stadium, and no Super Bowl participants will play in the all-star game.

As Bengals wide receiver Chad Ochocinco said on Twitter after discovering the AFC North champions have nobody going to the Pro Bowl:

"Just been informed myself nor any of my teammates made the Pro Bowl-bengal fans we wouldn't be abe to play in it anyway! SUPER BOWL BABY!!!"

Favre will be a backup to New Orleans' Drew Brees, the NFL's top-rated passer. The other NFC quarterback will be Aaron Rodgers, who replaced Favre in Green Bay last year.

"When you are voted in as a quarterback, you really represent the entire offense and the team," Brees said, "because there isn't anything I can accomplish without the offensive line, running backs, tight ends and wide receivers. So this is a recognition of what we've been able to achieve as a unit, and I've been thrilled to be a part of an offense that has worked together so well this season."

Tennessee running back Chris Johnson, the league's leading rusher, also made the AFC team, along with NFL receptions leader Wes Welker of New England. Manning will be backed up at quarterback by New England's Tom Brady and San Diego's Philip Rivers.

Vikings RB Adrian Peterson, the league's top scorer among non-kickers, will be in the NFC backfield. The other Vikings who made it: wide receiver Sidney Rice, defensive end Jared Allen, guard Steve Hutchinson, defensive tackle Kevin Williams, special teamer Heath Farwell and tackle Bryant McKinnie.

Dallas and Philadelphia, which meet for the NFC East title on Sunday, had the next most players on the NFC roster with six each, followed by top-seeded New Orleans with five. There were 13 first-timers chosen in the NFC in voting by fans, coaches and players.

Registration for Tank 2 Tank extended

The registration deadline for 2010's first big sporting event—the Tank 2 Tank—has been extended to Jan. 7, or a mere two days before the staging of the swim and run competition.

The Tank 2 Tank will begin at the old AJ's Restaurant on the beach in Susupe. Registration begins at 6:30am and the race starts at 7am. Registration is $20 for individuals and $30 for teams.

The event categories are: 8 years and under (100-meter swim and 1-kilometer run), 9-12 years old (200m swim and 2K run), 13-16 years old (500m swim and 2K run), Open for 17 years and older (1K swim and 5K run), Masters 40 years and older (1K swim and 5K run), and Anything Goes (500m swim and 2K run).

Youth participants of one of the recent Tank 2 Tank events make faces following the race. SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Teams must do the longest course to qualify for the team prize. In the Anything Goes category, swimmers may use fins, life jackets, or snorkel.

Sponsored by the Marianas Tourism Education Council to raise funds for tourism awareness, the event features a swim around an American Sherman World War II tank in the lagoon of the island of Saipan, followed by a run along the Saipan Beach Pathway to a Japanese World War II tank.

"As the first swim-run event of the year, the Tank 2 Tank is a great way to kick off a new year of healthy living—and support tourism at the same time," said MTEC vice chairperson and Tank 2 Tank chairperson Vicky Benavente. "Our various courses make this an ideal event for any level of competition—serious athlete, teams, kids, and those resolved to get fit this year."

Prizes will be awarded. All participants will receive a T-shirt and breakfast compliments of Saipan Grand Hotel.

Swimmers looking for runners or runners or looking for swimmers may contact Ed Diaz of the Marianas Visitors Authority at ediaz@mymarianas.com or 664-3210.

MTEC is a nonprofit organization promoting community awareness on the importance of the visitor industry in the Northern Marianas. ***(PR)***

DECENA

From Page 28

In the girls' 14-and-under doubles, Amy Arenovski and Negahr Rastguiy bowed to Nadine Del Carmen and Chloe Gadsden, 2-10. Arenovski and Rastguiy advanced to the finals after beating fellow CNMI netters Adele Hudkins and Emily Jones in the semifinals, 10-4. Del Carmen and Gadsden notched the second finals seat after thumping Camdyn and Ashley Nadler, 10-6.

In the girls' 14-and-under doubles finals, Gabrielle Race and Jeane Bracken fell to the Nadler siblings, 4-10.

The CNMI's Theecel Minor and Mikayla Lopez played in the girls' 18-and-under doubles finals, but lost to top seeds Terea Tapu and Gadsden, 7-10. Minor and Lopez marched to the finals after pulling off a 10-8 upset over second seeds Arlie Bonto and Alea Dugan. Tapu and Gadsden made it to the title match after downing the CNMI's Jodel Fernandez and Ilia Corella, 10-2.

Final results of other divisions were unavailable at press time, as games were still played yesterday.

In the round-robin girls' 18-and-under singles, Fernandez defeated Arenovski, 10-5, on Tuesday to stay unbeaten in three games. Fernandez's first two wins in the tournament were against Tapu (no show) and Corella, 10-4, on Sunday.

In the girls' 16-and-under, which also has a round-robin format, Minor prevailed over Sydney Short, 10-4.

In the girls' 14-and-under singles, Rastguiy swept her Day 3 matches to improve to a 5-1 record and boost her chances for the title. Rastguiy won over Lopez, 10-2, and Bracken, 10-7, on Tuesday and stunned Katie Lai, 10-8, and Race, 10-0, on Monday. On Sunday, Ratguiy topped Ashley Nadler, 10-8, but lost to Gadsden, 8-10.

LOYALTY

From Page 28

become better players. With these five players on the Sixers' lineup for four straight years, the team never missed the playoffs in that span.

Then last year, gunner Joe Ada joined the Sixers, making the team a strong competitor for the 2008 season of the 18-and-under caging. However, coach Duenas' wards fell short of their target and finished only third to the CNMI Junior Nationals and Rollers 1.

This year, Ada, who plays for MHS in the MISO caging, decided to remain with the Sixers and teamed up with the original Sixers crew and together they finally bagged the championship.

"It is great farewell gift for those who will be ineligible for the next season after spending all their playing years with the Sixers. At least, they have a championship trophy to treasure when they leave the team. It is their legacy to the team they decided to be with through good and bad times," coach Duenas said.

The Sixers coach was talking of seniors Flores, Matthew and Ernest Duenas, Pepito, Flores, and Rico Salas.

Matthew Duenas failed to play in the Sixers' title win over the G-Stars, but Pepito came to the team's rescue, suiting up in his lone game in the playoffs. Pepito scored 13 points in the finals, including a putback that ensured the Sixers' close win in the dying seconds of the finals.

"That's the good thing with this team, they know when to step up. If one or two players are missing, they are ready to fill the void. We knew Matt will not play because he was sick, so I told my players to be ready when they are called from the bench," coach Duenas added.

Besides Pepito, another player who gave Sixers quality minutes was Chris Duenas, who made a crucial steal in the last 20 seconds of the match.

"We have a lot players who know their roles on the team. They don't care if they get to lead the offense or come off the bench and play defense, they just want to do what they are told to," the Sixers mentor added.

G-STARS

From Page 28

Maratita and crew were playing the Sixers in yesterday's afternoon game and results of the match were unavailable as of press time. The Sixers lost their debut against the Sonics.

Ol'Aces won over Hopwood LMA on Monday and made it two in a row after beating Rollers B, 52-36.

Trevor Ogumoro led Ol'Aces' win, firing 18 points, while Eli Augenbaugh chipped in 12.

Action in the Christmas caging, which is also holding competitions in the girls'14-and-under/boys' 11-and-under and boys'14-and-under/girls'18-and-under divisions, will continue today, while playoff games are set for Saturday.

ISLAND

From Page 28

hitting 3-for-4 at bat and firing three runs, one double, and one homer. Leftfielder Byron Kaipat tallied three RBIs on a 2-for-4 performance at bat.

After falling behind by nine, 6-15, Lancheros launched a comeback at the top of the seventh inning when their first six batters reached home plate. However, Island Rebels began playing tough defense in the next play, throwing out Lancheros' next two batters and after Sheldon Fernandez's single, Kaipat caught a fly ball from Dimas Omar to seal the win for Island Rebels.

Lancheros absorbed their third loss in four games.

6-Pack 25, G-Ballers 15

6-Pack is also on a roll, crushing G-Ballers, 25-15, after only four and a half innings.

The win was 6-Pack's third in a row after losing its debut against Fuegu.

6-Pack had its winning run in danger of being snapped when it trailed, 13-15, after three complete innings. However, G-Ballers failed to sustain its momentum and allowed 6-Pack to steal the game in the last two innings.

A five-run top of the fourth, highlighted by Blas Magofna's solo homer gave 6-Pack an 18-15 lead and the team kept the advantage after shutting out Ramblers at the bottom of the fourth.

Lucian George homered for 6-Pack at the start of the top of the fifth to spark another rally. 6-Pack scored six more runs in that inning for a 10-run mercy rule win.

6-Pack's victory sent G-Ballers to the bottom of the team standings, as the latter dropped to a 0-4 slate.

Hitz 15, Ramblers 1

Hitz's defense was all over the field, giving the team an easy 15-1 win over Ramblers.

Ramblers scored only at the top of the fifth with Jess Magofna reaching home plate on Hitz's error.

On offense, Hitz leaned on first baseman Ponzie Tarope's three-run homer at the bottom of the first inning to seize control of the game early. Leftfielder Jun Kaipat also blasted a three-run homer at the bottom of the third inning to lead Hitz breakaway.

Kaipat was perfect at the plate, going 3-for-3, making three runs, one triple, and five RBIs. Shortstop Kyle Kaipat was 2-for-3 at bat, logged two runs, one homer, and two RBIs.

Hitz improved to a 2-2 mark, while Ramblers fell to a 1-4 slate.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	23	7	.767	–
Toronto	15	17	.469	9
New York	12	19	.387	11 1/2
Philadelphia	8	22	.267	15
New Jersey	2	29	.065	21 1/2

Southeast Division

Orlando	22	8	.733	–
Atlanta	21	9	.700	1
Miami	16	12	.571	5
Charlotte	12	17	.414	9 1/2
Washington	10	20	.333	12

Central Division

Cleveland	25	8	.758	–
Chicago	12	17	.414	11
Milwaukee	12	17	.414	11
Detroit	11	20	.355	13
Indiana	9	21	.300	14 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

Dallas	22	9	.710	–
San Antonio	18	11	.621	3
Houston	19	13	.594	3 1/2
Memphis	14	16	.467	7 1/2
New Orleans	13	16	.448	8

Northwest Division

Denver	20	12	.625	–
Portland	20	13	.606	1/2
Utah	17	13	.567	2
Oklahoma City	17	14	.548	2 1/2
Minnesota	7	25	.219	13

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	25	6	.806	–
Phoenix	20	12	.625	5 1/2
Sacramento	14	16	.467	10 1/2
L.A. Clippers	13	17	.433	11 1/2
Golden State	9	22	.290	16

Yesterday's Games

Cleveland 95, Atlanta 84
Oklahoma City 110, Washington 98
New York 104, Detroit 87
Chicago 104, Indiana 95
San Antonio 117, Minnesota 99
Houston 108, New Orleans 100
L.A. Lakers 124, Golden State 118

NBA LEADERS

Scoring

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Anthony, DEN	32	331	272	961	30.0
Bryant, LAL	30	336	194	897	29.9
James, CLE	32	322	223	920	28.8
Durant, OKC	30	285	236	845	28.2
Wade, MIA	28	259	210	750	26.8
Ellis, GOL	30	303	147	769	25.6
Nowitzki, DAL	30	277	188	765	25.5
Bosh, TOR	32	258	229	751	23.5
Roy, POR	32	258	168	731	22.8
Arenas, WAS	29	229	141	656	22.6
Johnson, ATL	29	240	97	621	21.4
Gay, MEM	28	220	117	577	20.6
Evans, SAC	28	212	130	569	20.3
Stoudemire, PHX	32	246	157	649	20.3
Kaman, LAC	30	250	100	600	20.0
Randolph, MEM	30	241	114	599	20.0
Williams, UTA	28	204	115	557	19.9
Duncan, SAN	26	207	103	517	19.9
Boozer, UTA	30	235	116	586	19.5
Jennings, MIL	29	208	92	565	19.5

FG Percentage

	FG	FGA	PCT
Perkins, BOS	142	219	.648
Howard, ORL	167	269	.621
Gasol, MEM	170	278	.612
Horford, ATL	170	288	.590
Landry, HOU	181	313	.578
Lee, NYK	226	392	.577
Hilario, DEN	165	287	.575
Millsap, UTA	129	226	.571
O'Neal, MIA	139	244	.570
Stoudemire, PHX	246	440	.559

Rebounds

	G	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG
Howard, ORL	30	113	288	401	13.4
Noah, CHI	28	117	231	348	12.4
Wallace, CHA	28	61	273	334	11.9
Camby, LAC	29	86	247	333	11.5
Randolph, MEM	30	143	198	341	11.4
Bosh, TOR	32	103	256	359	11.2
Lee, NYK	30	72	252	324	10.8
Boozer, UTA	30	60	260	320	10.7
Haywood, WAS	29	118	184	302	10.4
Duncan, SAN	26	79	188	267	10.3

Assists

	G	AST	AVG
Nash, PHX	32	360	11.3
Paul, NOR	20	214	10.7
Williams, UTA	28	280	10.0
Rondo, BOS	30	290	9.7
Kidd, DAL	31	284	9.2
James, CLE	32	250	7.8
B. Davis, LAC	30	232	7.7
Westbrook, OKC	30	208	6.9
Arenas, WAS	29	199	6.9
Duhon, NYK	30	193	6.4

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOCAL SCORES

BUDWEISER SOFTBALL STANDINGS

Island Rebels	5	0
Natibu	3	0
SaiPal	3	0
Chura	3	1
Man Amigos	3	1
6-Pack	3	1
San Roque	2	1
Red Eye	2	1
Ur Balls	2	2
Freedom Air Flyers	2	2
Hitz	2	2
Blazers	1	1
Team Familia	1	2
Berdax	1	2
Calikano-Falcons	1	2
Lancheros	1	3
Go For Broke	1	3
Team Fuegu	1	3
Ramblers	1	4
X-Terminators0	3	
G-Ballers	0	4

2009 IT&E Inter Government/Business Basketball League Playoffs

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Docomo's Kae Bernardo kicks the ball out to a teammate as he is trapped by IT&E's Bruce Berline at the baseline during their game in the 2009 IT&E Inter Government/Business Basketball League at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Hyatt Regency Saipan's Ray Lizama, center, makes a layup against Docomo's Wowie Abuel, and Jun Estolas.

IT&E's Elmer Esdrelon, right, goes for a layup against Docomo's Syl Teregeyo.

IT&E teammates Jomary Tumaquip, left, and Bruce Berline duel for the loose ball.

Tinian's Ringo Reyes beats two Docomo defenders in this rebound play.

Tinian and Docomo players battle for the rebound.

DCCA's Ponce Rasa goes up for a shot against IT&E's Bruce Berline.

Hyatt Regency Saipan's Nate Mateo pulls up for a shot against Docomo's Kae Bernardo.

PSS' Joe Villacrusis eludes the defense of Hyatt Regency Saipan's Nate Mateo for an easy layup.

PSS' Peter Mendiola goes up for a reverse layup against Hyatt Regency Saipan's Yosh Gabaldon.

Registration for Tank 2 Tank extended

The registration deadline for 2010's first big sporting event–the Tank 2 Tank–has been extended to Jan 7, or a mere two days before the staging of the swim and run competition.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Cavaliers clip Hawks again, 95-84

The Cleveland Cavaliers held Atlanta scoreless for almost nine minutes to open the fourth quarter to break open a close game and beat the Hawks 95-84 in the NBA on Tuesday.

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Decena triumphs in Guam junior tennis

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Tinian netter Benjie Decena ended 2009 with a bang, ruling the boys' 18-and-under division singles event of the 2009 Guam Junior Open Championships last Tuesday at the Ninete Tennis Centre in Hagatna.

It was an upset win for Decena, who stunned second seed Michael Tan in the finals, 10-5. The Tinian bet started his title bid with a surprising 10-7 win over tournament No. 1 seed Marten Lai in the quarterfinals. In the all-CNMI semifinals, Decena prevailed over teammate Rafael Jones, 10-3. Tan foiled an all-CNMI finals when he won the other semis match against Nathan Nutting, 10-2.

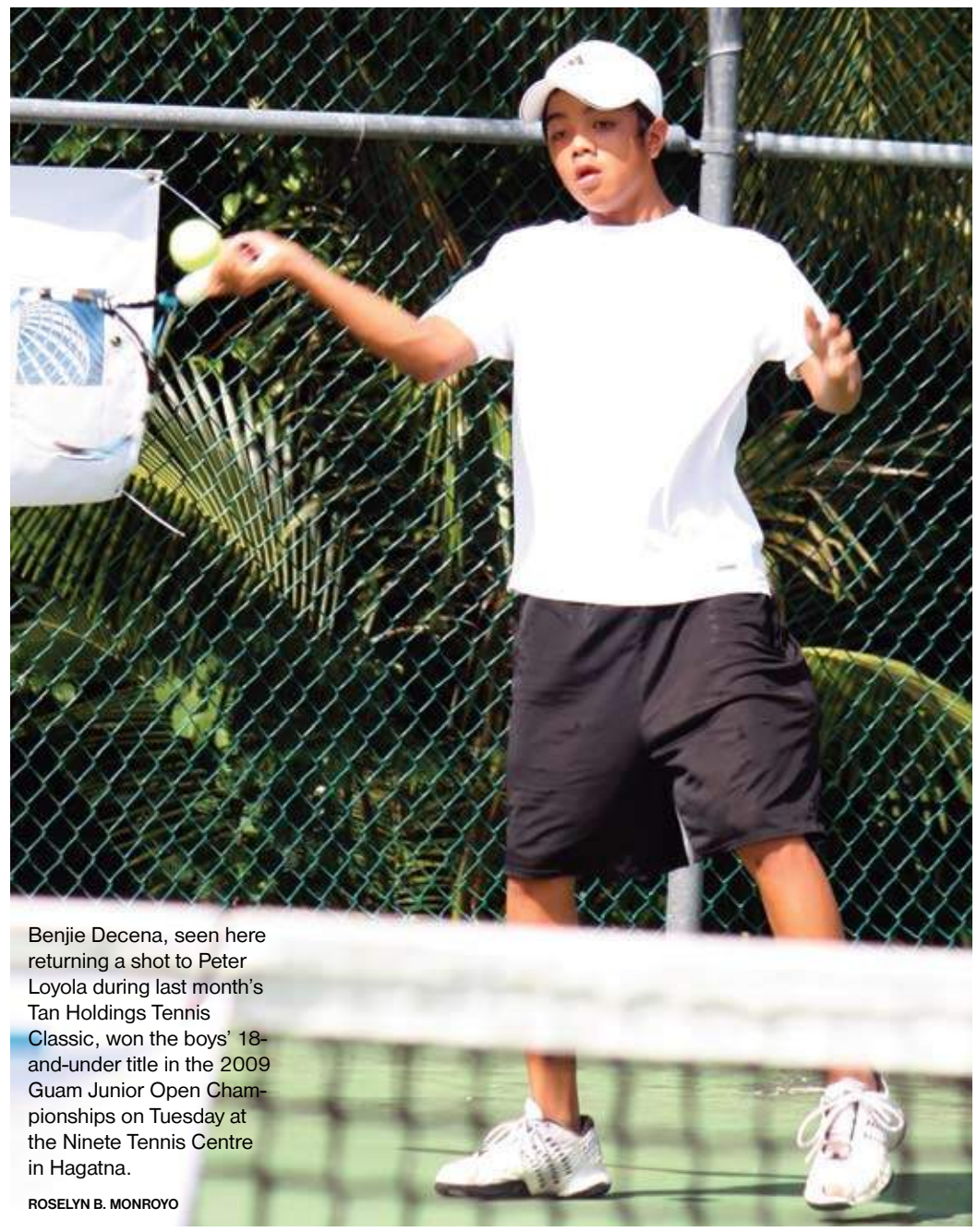
In the boys' 18-and-under doubles, Decena was paired with Tan and won two games on Tuesday to top the event. Decena and Tan thwarted Andy and Nathan Nutting, 10-0, and Gerard and Paul Llanura, 10-1. The Nutting siblings prevailed in the third game in Day 3, edging the Llanura brothers to settle for second place.

Decena's wins in the boys' 18-and-under singles and doubles finals prevented a CNMI shutout in Day 3 of the four-day tournament.

The CNMI failed to make it 2-for-2 on Tuesday when top seed Christian Miller lost to the second-ranked Emil Christian Penafiel in the boys' 14-and-under singles finals, 5-10.

The Commonwealth also dropped its three championship games in doubles events.

See DECENA on Page 26



Benjie Decena, seen here returning a shot to Peter Loyola during last month's Tan Holdings Tennis Classic, won the boys' 18-and-under title in the 2009 Guam Junior Open Championships on Tuesday at the Ninete Tennis Centre in Hagatna.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Loyalty pays off for Sixers cagers

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
The Sixers' Joe Ada threads the defense of G-Stars' J.R. Concepcion, right, and Joseph Jung during their title game in the Rotary caging last week at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Newly crowned Rotary caging champions San Antonio Sixers proved it's worth it to stick to one team.

"While players of other teams bolted from their original squads and transferred, our players decided to stay together. These are the same players that I started coaching four years ago. They stuck together and now they are reaping the fruits of their decision to remain in one team," Sixers coach Ray Duenas said.

The Sixers ruled the 2009 Saipan Rotary Club Youth Basketball League after beating pennant champion G-Stars in the finals, 55-54, last week at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

It was coach Duenas' first championships since taking over the coaching chores for the southern-based Sixers.

When he started calling the shots for Sixers, coach Duenas had then 14-year-olds Matthew and Ernest Duenas, Ian Benavente, Nathan Flores, and Novo Pepito on his roster. These players stayed with the Sixers despite getting invitations from other squads and coach Duenas saw how they matured and

See LOYALTY on Page 26

G-Stars lead in Holiday Hoops

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The G-Stars kept the lead in Pool A of the boys' 18-and-under division of the 2009 Annual Youth Christmas Hoop Fest after thrashing Hopwood Oldies, 60-27, yesterday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The G-Stars, which debuted in the tournament with a win over Rollers A, went 2-0 in their pool after a hot start in their second game. The Jose Tumaquip-coached G-Stars took a 33-10 lead at the end of the first half en route to a 33-point win.

Ezra Caro paced the G-Stars with 13 points, while Marvin Rabauliman and Shane Metran chipped in 10 apiece.

Hopwood Oldies played two games in the same day and bounced back from a loss to the G-Stars after downing the Torchbearers, 61-29. Hopwood Oldies finished pool play with a 2-2 record.

Rollers A also played yesterday and improved to a 2-1 mark after whipping sister team Rollers C, 76-47.

Brandon Aurelio led Rollers A's win, firing three triples and ending up with 15 markers. Luizi Reyes and Pete Torres also scored in double figures, nailing 12 and 10 points, respectively. Rollers A is in second place in Pool A behind the G-Stars. Hopwood Oldies are in third, followed by Rollers C (1-2), and Torchbearers (0-2).

Standings are subject to change, as several games were still being played yesterday.

In Pool B, Ol'Aces and Kagman Boyz Brok are currently tied for the lead with their identical 2-0 slate.

Kagman slipped past the Southern Sonics, 85-83, behind the back-to-back baskets of Juan Maratita. Maratita exploded for 37 points for Kagman, scoring 17 of the team's first 18 points.

See G-STARS on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
The Sixers' Ian Benavente pulls up for a shot against a phalanx of Kagman defenders during their game in the boys' 18-and-under division of the Christmas caging yesterday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Island Rebels remain undefeated

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Island Rebels will end 2009 unbeaten in the Chamolinian Softball Association's 2009 Budweiser Slow-pitch Softball League, following their 15-12 win over Lancheros on Monday at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

The victory was the fifth in as many games for Island Rebels, strengthening their hold at the No. 1 spot in the team standings in the 21-squad field.

Catcher Vince Duenas led Island Rebels' win, as he went 4-for-4 at the plate, scored three runs, one double, two triples, and four RBIs. Shortstop Toi Celis also made four RBIs after

See ISLAND on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Byron Kaipat plays for Island Rebels and hit a three-run homer in their 15-12 win over Lancheros in the Chamolinian league on Monday at the Capital Hill Ballfield.